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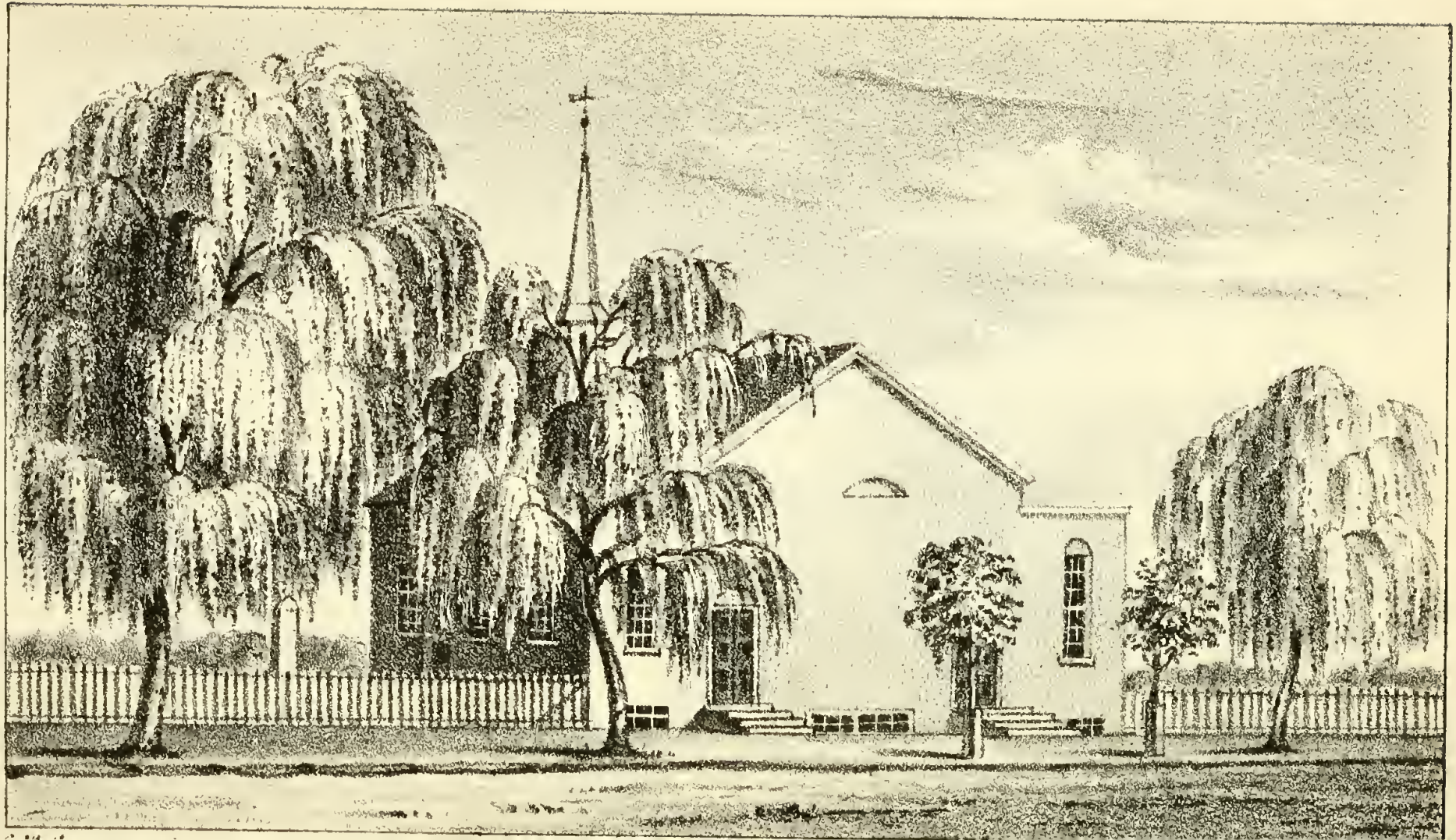

MEMOIR

OF

MARTHA THOMPSON SHARP,

BY HER PASTOR,

REV. JAS. I. HELM, A. M.,

PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, SALEM, N. J.

"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming?"

PAUL.

PHILADELPHIA:

DANIELS & SMITH, FIFTH AND ARCH STS.

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1849.

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WM. S. YOUNG, PRINTER.

TO THE

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

WITH WHOM SHE WAS ASSOCIATED,

AND TO WHOM HER DYING LIPS DICTATED

THE LOVING REQUEST—

"MEET ME IN HEAVEN;"

This little volume

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY

MARTHA'S SORROWING

PASTOR.

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"Why love we so a sin-stained earth?
When fetterless to roam
'Tis ours among yon isles of light;
Each starry isle a home.

"Home of the pure and innocent!
Where spirits live and love:
Home, where the holy and the just,
A Saviour's mercies prove.

"Home of the Christian's humble hope,
The Christian's ardent prayer;
Who would that humblest hope forego,
For all that's certain here?"

MEMOIR

OF

MARTHA THOMPSON SHARP.

INTRODUCTION.

A perfect image of religion is found only on the page of God's word. But a very interesting portraiture is seen, also, in the life of every consistent Christian. An exact delineation of the Christian life, is therefore alike interesting and instructive. Next to the simple and inimitable views of Christian character and experience which have been given by inspired authors, may be placed those authentic narratives which record with strict fidelity the life, and truly represent the character of exemplary and devoted Christians.

The preparation of religious memoirs is not, however, without its difficulties. One of these arises from the very nature of the Christian life. This has always two aspects—one interior and invisible, another outward and apparent. The true *life* of a Christian, is that which is going on in the soul itself, and consists in its own trains of emotion and successive exercises. A record of this life would describe the secret impressions, the mysterious workings, and the invisible conflicts of the pious heart. It would reveal the operation of divine grace in the conversion, and its progress in the sanctification of the believer. It would depict the vicissitudes of his experience—the alternate fears and hopes, joys and sorrows by which his breast is agitated; the decay of spiritual affections into which he sometimes falls, and the merciful revivings with which he is again favoured. But this is a *hidden* life. It is not always comprehended by the subject himself, and another can take

no direct cognizance of it whatever. That which is ordinarily called the life of a Christian, is only the expression of his real life. It is always, too, an imperfect manifestation of what is taking place in his own soul. Yet it is all that belongs properly to the public; while at the same time its value depends on its being shown in a true relation to the other; because a man is really what he is at heart. If the likeness which is drawn from his external conduct be the faithful copy of his true principles and real motives, it speaks truth; otherwise, however beautiful in itself, it only deceives. But to preserve this strict truth, not only of appearance, but of fact, is often very difficult.

Again, it is not every true, nor even every eminent Christian that furnishes a good subject for biography. It is not every bright example of piety that can be so embodied in a memoir as to please and benefit those who did not enjoy a living acquaintance. To possess gene-

ral interest, a memoir must contain one of two elements—perhaps both. There must be *action* to describe, sufficient to give a particular, various, and life-like view of the character; or there must exist sufficient *remains* to convey a definite and personal impression of the individual mind and heart. Where these are both wanting, biography is not practicable. It matters not how much of worth and loveliness existed in the living person, how attractive were the actual companionship, and how sweet the lingering remembrance on the minds and bosoms of surviving friends; the attempt to embody their impressions in a narrative, and by mere statements of personal qualities to give individuality and permanent interest to the record, must always prove abortive.

In the case of very young persons, one of these elements is mostly scanty, and the other nearly, if not altogether wanting. Hence the difficulty of imparting special inte-

rest to youthful memorials; and hence, probably, the fact, that in the department of juvenile biography, we find so many overdrawn and highly embellished narratives.

The following memorial was undertaken with a distinct comprehension of the difficulty, and a fixed determination to avoid, if possible, the fault now stated. It did not originate with the parents or family of its subject. They did not wish to obtrude their sorrows on the public; but would have been content to share their grief with those only who knew and loved their child, and to cherish in their aching hearts the memory of the beloved dead. But other Christian friends were anxious to know the personal history of one who charmed even by the slightest acquaintance. Before the writer left the chamber of death, he formed the purpose of drawing up, if sufficient materials were found to exist, a memoir for publication. The same suggestion came afterwards from several Christian friends, inde-

pendently each of the other. It is now done; and the judicious reader will decide whether the design were wise or not. Of one thing he may feel assured; he is perusing the simple truth. The facts are not overstated; no meretricious colouring is given to the character; and the picture as a whole is less attractive than the original. It is hoped the memorial will do honour to divine grace, and make a salutary impression on the minds, especially of young readers. True piety is beautiful at any period of human life. It is interesting when it sits with venerable sanctity upon the brow of age, and when it crowns with heavenly radiance the strength of mature years. But it is most lovely, when, united to the opening charms and winning promise of youth, it chastens the ardour, hallows the affections, and consecrates the energy of that interesting period. May it do for every young reader what it did for Martha.

CHAPTER I.

"But when the cherub lip hath learned to claim,
A mother's ear by that endearing name;
Soon as the playful innocent can prove,
A tear of pity, or a smile of love,
How fondly looks parental hope the while,
At every artless tear, at every smile."

MARTHA THOMPSON SHARP, was born in the village of Washington, Warren county, New Jersey, on the 10th of August, 1830. Her father is Jacob T. Sharp, M. D., a highly respectable physician now resident in Salem, N. J. Her mother, Mrs. Hannah Ann Sharp, is a daughter of Edward Smith, Esq., of Philadelphia, and a sister of Rev. Edward D.

Smith, pastor of the Chelsea Presbyterian church in the city of New York. Both the parents of Martha, and many of her relatives are communicants in the Presbyterian church. She not only enjoyed, therefore, the inestimable blessing of a Christian education; but from her earliest childhood was accustomed to see religion valued and reverenced by those whom she most loved.

It is always difficult to fill up any thing like a distinct portrait of childhood. In the little history of our life, this period is nearly a blank to all but the individual. But while it is scarcely noticed in its manifestations, no equal space of human life is so fruitful in the elements of character. It is the period of impressions. The instincts and faculties of the mind have only begun their incipient movements; and like the earliest steps of bodily motion, its attempts are long feeble and hesitating. At the same time it is alive to every external impression. Quick in its perceptions

and instinct with sensibility, it catches the hue and receives the impress of nearly every object. It is equally susceptible and retentive. Habits which are easily and rapidly formed, become permanent; and impressions caught like the shadow of a passing object, become indelible as if graven on brass. Before we are aware of what is going on in the infant mind, it has not unfrequently taken its bent for life—it may be for eternity.

It is not known that the childhood of Martha differed materially from that of other children in like circumstances; or that it was marked by any thing so far out of the ordinary course of juvenile experience as to be interesting to the reader. There is always enough, especially in the first born of a family, to attract the watchful eye of a parent, and which to that fond and partial eye at least appears striking. Even the unconscious smile delights. The first dawn of intellect is marked with pleasing wonder. The development of

each faculty is hailed with rapture; and every newly acquired power seems more and more striking. But long familiarity with infantile developments in an increasing household, at length obliterates these impressions from even the parental memory; and leaves treasured there the more vivid remembrance of the cares, anxieties, and ceaseless toils by which those years were filled.

Martha was a small and fragile infant, and slowly acquired the active use of her limbs. But this point being reached, she became a lively and active child, and usually enjoyed good health. She soon displayed a character of uncommon energy. Every impulse was quick and powerful, and every feeling ardent. In her were combined exquisite sensibility, warm affection, buoyant spirits, and great animation. These united to the usual forgetfulness of a light-hearted child, made her occasionally seem heedless and perhaps wayward, though never wilfully disobedient.

Her mental endowments were very superior. That quickness of perception and facility of acquiring knowledge which afterwards distinguished her began early to appear. Before she could speak, she knew all her letters; and at a very early age she read with great beauty of expression. From that time until the end of her life, she manifested a love of knowledge beyond her years.

It is not surprising that divine truth should have made on her quick and susceptible mind an early and lasting impression. Accordingly, she has often remarked that she could not remember a period when she did not feel the influence of serious things. A tenderness of conscience unusual to one so young, was a trait early seen in her character. About the age of four years she spent some time at her grandfather's in Philadelphia. Her aunt, (now Mrs. Newkirk) who had the care of her, has often mentioned the peculiar tenderness of conscience which she manifested at that

time. In the evening she would call her attention to the various occurrences of the day, and urge her to reflect seriously on her conduct. Sometimes she would remind her of some wayward temper or infantile disobedience, and at the same time address her in a kind but serious manner. "Martha, you have done such and such things to-day that were wrong. Now I wish you to think about them, and to feel as you ought before you lie down to-night." At such times she would be deeply affected, and copious tears would accompany her penitent confessions. A little prayer in verse which her aunt taught her at the same period, was never forgotten; and some of her own Sunday school scholars will remember having learned from her lips to say—

"My Father, I thank thee for sleep,
For quiet and peaceable rest;
I thank thee for stooping to keep
An infant from being distressed;

Oh how shall a poor little creature repay,
Thy fatherly kindness by night and by day!"

At the age of six years she received from Mrs. Alexander Henry, her mother's aunt, a pocket New Testament. Her present was selected in accordance with her own choice, and even at that tender age she set a special value upon it. From that time it became her constant companion, and was found in the pocket of her last worn dress after her death. It contains her own name, the name of her aunt by whom it was presented, and the date at which it was received. It has also as a motto inserted in it, the words "*for ever*," designed to express either her attachment to the word of God, or the scope of her views in living. Either sense was appropriate to her feelings and aims.

A few years later the same relative made her a present of a small reference Bible for the pocket. It is now one of the most interesting memorials of her love for God's word;

and it is believed that she scarcely passed a waking hour without this Bible or the New Testament before mentioned about her person. From long and constant usage, the Bible is much worn. It contains unequivocal evidence both of repeated and attentive perusal. Almost every page shows that it has been familiar to her eye. A great number of passages are marked with her pencil. Some are recognised as the texts of sermons preached by her pastor. Some are probably the texts of discourses preached by other ministers. But there are others evidently designated, solely with reference to her experimental feelings. This is obvious either from the fact that they are not adapted to public discourse, while they have a striking relation to personal emotions, or from the emphatic manner in which they are distinguished. Occasionally a single word thus marked is eloquent of experimental devotion.

During the interval between her sixth and

ninth years, her parents resided in Philadelphia. Here she received the ordinary school instruction adapted to children of her age. She also attended, as a scholar, the Sunday School of the Central Presbyterian Church. These instructions, aided by maternal efforts, served to expand her faculties, and to impart those views of religious truth, which afterwards became so clear and luminous.

SPRING.

Old gloomy winter with his frosty brow,
Is fast disappearing—the sunbeams now
Have the golden colour of lovely spring,
While the forest birds have commenced to sing
In their leafy boughs of so deep a green,
That the sun's bright rays are scarcely seen.
The violets blue have lifted their heads
O'er the snow that covers their mossy beds;
While the May rose, encircled by many a thorn,
Has smiled a welcome to the summer morn.

The loveliest season is spring to me,
When each voice sounds a note replete with glee;
When the brightest hue of the flowers you see,
And the birds are not rivalled in melody.
Oh many prefer the dull autumn brief,
Their fancy is struck by the yellow leaf,
They say that the sun sheds a brighter ray
Than he does on the loveliest summer day.
But I cannot believe them: I know 'tis true
That the falling leaf has a sombre hue.
But then 'tis the prelude to winter drear,
When the whistling winds sound the notes of fear;
When the snow thickly lies on the frozen plain,
And the birds' lively song is ne'er heard on the main.
Then give me the spring with its flowers bright—
Oh give me the spring with the sweet sunlight—
And joyfully on my lone path I'll go,
Praising my God from whom blessings flow.

M. T. S.

March 5, 1846.

CHAPTER II.

"Ye to whose care Jehovah has consigned
The dying body and th' immortal mind,
Ah! claim not for them wealth, or power, or fame,
Earth, mis'ry, half-existence, and a name!
But pray your God to keep a watchful eye,
Support, defend, preserve and teach to die."

In the year 1839 the parents of Martha removed with their family to Salem, New Jersey, where the remainder of her life was spent, and where sleeps her hallowed dust. It was here, when a little less than ten years old, the writer of this memoir became acquainted with her. He soon marked her as no common child. Even at this moment, the imag-

of Martha as she then was, is vividly before his mind. Her little white apron, her quick and energetic motion, her speaking eye, her soul-revealing countenance, her warmth of emotion and almost excessive sensibility, her prompt answer in language marked by a child's simplicity, and more than a child's understanding; every feature and trait is there, as she stands before the eye of memory, an impersonation of life, intelligence, and feeling. It was evident that she possessed those powers and susceptibilities of mind, and those strong impulses of the heart which form decided *character* of some kind. If devoted to the world, it was likely to be with passionate fondness; and if on the other hand her heart should be consecrated to the Redeemer, it would be with equal decision and devotedness. These anticipations were abundantly confirmed by subsequent acquaintance with her as a pastor.

About this time she began to attend as a

pupil, the Salem Academy; the female department of which was under the care of Miss A. W. Maylin. This lady bears the following testimony respecting the deportment and progress of her pupil. "Martha shared in the daily instructions of my school room for more than four years. She studied her lessons with an intelligent interest which made it very pleasant to teach her; never committing them in a manner merely mechanical, but always evincing by her remarks and inquiries, that the workings of her mind went beyond the surface of the several things to which her attention was directed. In the religious instructions of the school, and especially our regular Bible lessons, she ever manifested attention and seriousness.

"To myself she was uniformly respectful and affectionate; and in any little indisposition or trouble, I might always rely on her kindness and sympathy. She was in the habit of writing me endearing little notes, expres-

sive of her regard for me or her interest in school duties. These are now valued as precious mementos of those departed days. When she ceased to be my pupil, our social intercourse became that of companions and friends. May we be such in heaven.

"A. W. M."

At this school began her acquaintance with Miss M. I——, which afterwards ripened into a very tender intimacy. They were about the same age, and resembled each other in their gifts and attainments. After this young lady returned home, a correspondence at first occasional, but subsequently at regular monthly intervals, was begun and continued until Martha's death. Copious extracts from her letters to this early friend will be found in the future pages of this memoir.

In August, 1840, a little incident occurred which shows both the activity of her mind, and the bent of her taste at that time. A

copy of "The Minister's Family," by Rev. W. M. Hetherington, belonging to her pastor, incidentally fell into her hands. Without having her attention drawn to it by any other person, she withdrew to read it alone and undisturbed. As it was not usual for her to be absent from the house without the knowledge of the family, it became a matter of surprise what could have become of Martha. Absorbed in her book, she seemed meanwhile to have become unconscious of every thing else. At length, late in the day, she came from her retreat, and with sparkling eye and animated face expressed the enjoyment she had found in her book, which she had completely finished.

As her mind expanded, Martha began to take an intelligent interest in public discourse, and became an attentive hearer of the preached word. When she was eleven and a half years old, her pastor delivered a number of sermons on "the Church and Sacraments."

One of these discussed the question of a Prelatical Succession. A day or two afterwards he received a note requesting the loan of the manuscript. Not looking particularly at the signature, he mistook it for her mother's, and sent the discourse, with a wish, that as it was of a controversial character, it might not be permitted to fall into other hands. Great was his surprise to learn that Martha herself was the applicant. She not only made the request of her own accord, but perused the manuscript with great avidity, and also gave, in a letter to a friend, an intelligent outline of the argument. Although not adapted to any personal religious impression, this little circumstance appeared to have an important influence upon her mind. For thereafter she heard with increasing attention and delight the usual ministrations of the gospel.

CHAPTER III.

"To think when heaven and earth are fled,
And times and seasons o'er;
When all that *can* die shall be dead,
That *I* shall die no more."

It is not the chief design of this memoir to set forth the mental gifts and accomplishments of its subject. The great aim is, to exhibit the image of Christ in her character; to trace the formation of that image; and to detail the means by which it was brought out with so much lustre in her person. Blessed with a careful religious education, she was early and often the subject of serious feelings more or

less tender. She has frequently declared that from her earliest recollection she had felt at times a longing desire to be a Christian. We have already seen that she possessed a tender and enlightened conscience; that she gave careful attention to the preaching of the gospel; and that she regarded the word of God with singular affection. We now come to a period of more distinct and decided religious impressions. Early in the year 1843, at the still tender age of twelve and a-half years, she became deeply anxious to obtain an interest in the Lord Jesus as her Saviour. This was manifested in a more serious attention to the means of grace, and in much and earnest prayer to God for his saving mercy. Her school compositions and her letters were at this time pervaded with her sense of the value and importance of religion. To possess the religion of Christ, to live in the enjoyment of its hopes, and to die in the peace of God's children, was to her mind the one great thing,

the sum of happiness, the measure of her highest anticipations. The writer has before him a little tale composed at this time, in which, though not adapted for insertion in this memoir, the temper of her mind reveals itself. Two little children—brother and sister—orphans and friendless, but maintaining their religious principles in adversity, find at length an asylum and friends in the family of a village *pastor*. He learns on inquiry that the *sister* is a *member* of the church, and urges the brother to attend also to the great subject. The sister accompanies the pastor on a visit to a sick and dying man, who gives an account of his life, and tells how afflictions had been the means of bringing him to a knowledge of Christ. The little girl discovers in him an uncle, and witnesses his peaceful and happy death. Thus every incident takes the shape of her own conceptions and her cherished desires.

The manuscript volume which contains this

little story includes also a number of juvenile compositions in verse, all written in the month of March, 1843. One of these is headed—

EXHORTATION TO REPENTANCE.

Sinner, listen to that voice,
Sent to bid thy heart rejoice;
Listen! Jesus calls thee now,
At his feet, oh! humbly bow.

He is merciful and mild,
Meek and lowly as a child;
He is ready to forgive,
He has said, "Repent and live."

Another time may be too late,
He may leave you to your fate;
Grace and mercy he has shown;
The present time is all your own.

But a dreadful hour may come,
When he will not take you home,
When you will not hear his voice,
Bidding your hard heart rejoice.

Hasten while the word is spoken,
Wait not for another token;
Now's the time, now is the hour,
He 'll convert you by his power.

In this same month she received from her aunt, as a present, the memoir of MARY LUNDIE DUNCAN. As might be expected, she read this volume with the greatest delight. Her impressions were communicated to her aunt in the following *impromptu* stanzas:—

ON MARY LUNDIE DUNCAN.

TO MY AUNT.

I thank you, dear aunt, for that beautiful book,
On the face of a Christian 'tis pleasant to look;
That gentle expression, that soft eye of love,
Seemed fitted alone for the bright world above.

'Tis said that no pencil her features could trace,
No painter could copy the lines of her face;
That expression so lovely could not be portrayed,
Nor a portrait like her be successfully made.

I earnestly wish that her qualities rare,
And brilliant example 't may be mine to share;
That her meekness, her patience, her spirit of love,
May fall like a mantle on me from above.

I wish I could thank you, dear aunt, as I ought,
For my pleasure in reading the book you have bought;
I will study its pages, and hope you will find,
They have moulded my spirit as well as my mind.

The idea of an early death was familiar to the mind of Martha almost from a child. There are several striking expressions to this effect in her own hand-writing. This idea, connected with her estimate of the value and sufficiency of true religion, seems to have given shape to the following lines. They are from the manuscript volume of juvenile poems before mentioned, and written in the same month with the preceding.

THE DYING GIRL'S REQUEST.

Weep not for me when I am dead,
Weep not for me;
When in the earth you lay my head,
Weep not for me;
Grieve not that I have gone away,
To God for consolation pray;
Weep not for me.

Weep not for me when on the bier,
Weep not for me;
Weep not, though I have been so dear,
Weep not for me;
Angels come hovering from the throne,
To bear my happy spirit home;
Weep not for me.

For hope and joy go to the cross;
Weep not for me;
Cast all the world away as dross;
Weep not for me:
Though here no more you see my face,
Yet I have tried and won the race;
Weep not for me.

Adieu, my father and my mother:
Weep not for me;
Adieu, my sister and my brother;
Weep not for me:
But give your hearts to Jesus now;
And at his feet, oh, humbly bow:
Weep not—weep not for me.

One morning her pastor called at her father's, and found her unusually moved with anxious concern for the salvation of her soul. The whole interview is well remembered. The little room, the sofa by which he kneeled with the dear child in prayer, the copy of Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion" which she had in her hand, and the mingled tenderness and earnestness of her feelings, recur at this moment vivid and fresh as the events of yesterday.

Throughout the day her mind seemed completely absorbed in the great subject which engaged her thoughts. During the day, her mother casually entered on some errand an

apartment not very frequently used, and found the anxious child on her knees in prayer. So earnestly was her mind fixed on the solemn employment, that the intrusion was not observed; and the door being quietly closed, she was left to continue her supplications without interruption. Afterwards she returned to the room in which her mother sat, and without speaking opened her secretary and wrote for some minutes in the manuscript book already mentioned, and then replaced it and left the room. Her mother immediately examined the book and found the following:

RELIGION.

Oh! give me religion, that solace divine,
And tell me, my Saviour, oh! tell me I'm thine:
Oh! take away from me, this hard stony heart,
And send down thy Spirit, thy grace to impart.

I give myself up, my dear Saviour, to thee,
Thy glories and beauties, my soul would fain see:
Receive me, dear Jesus, though I am a child,
And make me, my Saviour, meek, gracious and mild.

I will praise thee, my Saviour, as long as I live,
For I know, by my Bible, my sins thou 'lt forgive;
The peace of my mind and the bliss of my soul,
The joy I experience is far past control.

Martha's anxiety on the subject of religion continued. But the precise character of her exercises during the summer is not known. For though her pastor often addressed her on the subject, she was always so much affected that, as she afterwards stated, she could not expres sher feelings, though very desirous to do so. A few lines more from her volume of juvenile poetry will show the interest she felt in the worship of God.

THE SABBATH.

All hail! thou day of rest,
To weary mortals given;
The day which God has blest,
A sweet foretaste of heaven.

Let us this day improve,
A day with blessings fraught;

And learn that Christ to love,
Who our redemption brought.

His precious blood alone
Our sins can wash away;
For God's incarnate Son
Now reigns in endless day.

In the latter part of the year 1844, Martha's religious impressions were much revived and deepened. On the last Sabbath in that year — December 29 — her pastor preached two discourses from Rev. iii. 20: "Behold I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." She heard them with fixed and eager attention, and, as he thought, with considerable emotion. Calling after the evening service at her father's house for some medicine, he very happily saw her for a few moments alone. The opportunity was embraced to speak with her concerning her own

salvation. As was anticipated, he found her deeply moved on that all-important subject, but involved in much perplexity and discouragement. He endeavoured to say what was best suited to her case at the time; and especially to encourage her to an immediate reception of the Lord Jesus as her Saviour. He urged her to consider the address in the text as made directly to herself, and to approach the Saviour just as she was, with a cordial surrender of all to him, an implicit trust in his promise, and an entire consecration of herself to his service. This, she afterwards informed her pastor, she tried that night solemnly to do, and with a comfortable hope of acceptance in the great transaction. Whether that was the moment when she first experienced a saving conversion to God, it is not necessary here to decide. But she herself always referred to it as the time when her own consciousness gave the first clear recognition to a gracious work in her soul.

She was then a little more than fourteen years of age.

Since the above was written, the following letter to her early friend and school-mate already mentioned has been received.

Salem, N. J., Dec. 31, 1844.

. . . . . "It is indeed, my dear Mary, a solemn thing to think how many years we have wasted, and how often we have let our precious moments fly unheeded; while perhaps we were engaged in some trifling pursuit. But should we not rather improve the present, than grieve over the past? The last day in the year is a fit time to indulge such thoughts. How much cause have we for gratitude! Each day has brought innumerable mercies, and each day has witnessed our coldness and ingratitude to the Giver of all good. Oh, my beloved Mary, let us try to spend this year as we ought. Let us live more to God; and may our many blessings bring us

often to the throne of grace in grateful acknowledgments for them.

"I feel that I am not as I once was—thoughtless on the subject of religion; and I hope and pray that the Lord will continue the good work he has begun in me. The Saviour is all-sufficient; and all he requires of us is to feel that all-sufficiency, and to cast ourselves upon him, saying, with the leper—'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.' You know, dearest M., that if we were from this time henceforth to obey every precept of the law, it could not atone for the past; and that it is only the justifying blood of Christ that washes out our past transgressions, and writes our names in the Lamb's book of life. By our own works we can neither become holy nor good. I hope you will always open your heart to me, and I will do so to you. I approve highly of the Saturday* weekly

* Her friend had proposed that on every Saturday evening they should specially pray for each other.

concert. It is sweet to be remembered by a friend in prayer. It will keep us alive to the eternal interests of all whom we love, but especially of each other. My fervent prayers shall ascend to heaven in behalf of you and all my friends. May the Spirit of God descend and warm our cold hearts, and help us to be devoted to Him who loved us and gave himself for us.

"The text last Sabbath was, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' Mr. Helm said the Lord was knocking at the door of every heart. He showed how sinful it is to keep the Saviour standing without. He finished the subject in the evening, and concluded with the important question—whether we would longer refuse admission to the blessed Saviour? Let us ponder this in our hearts and derive much instruction from it. I wish you could hear Mr. H., although

you may have equally good preaching at home. I hope you find much comfort in hearing the word of God.

"I, too, have experienced bitter feelings among my companions at school, and can truly sympathize with you. I find it very hard to do right; but I hope these things will be of much use to us, in preparing us to bear all manner of persecution as true followers of Christ. I know this has not been uninteresting to you, if I may judge by myself.

MARTHA."

Since the death of Martha, a paper has been found dated (and evidently written) one day later than the above letter, and three days after the Sabbath evening referred to. It contains the following solemn consecration of herself to God.

"2 Cor. viii. 5. *They first gave their ownselves to the Lord.*

"Encouraged by this example, and by thy gracious promise, 'I will be your God, and ye

shall be my people,' I desire now to devote myself to thee wholly, to thee alone, and to thee for ever. Thine, O Lord, I am by creation and by thy providential care; and I desire, from this time forth, to be thine by redeeming grace, and thine by my own cordial and unreserved dedication. Though by nature I am a child of wrath, and by my practice have too long and too obstinately sinned against Heaven and in thy sight; yet now I desire to return to thee from whom I have revolted, to renounce for ever the slavery of sin, and to surrender myself to thy service. I give myself to thee, O Father, and beseech thee put me among thy regenerated and adopted children. I give myself to thee, O Lord Jesus, and entreat thee to be my Saviour, instructer, governor, and intercessor. I give myself to thee, O Holy Spirit, and implore thee to be my sanctifier, quickener, and comforter. I give myself to thee, thou one Jehovah, to be thine in soul and in body, in

time and through eternity; and to employ all that I am, and all that I possess in obeying thy will and promoting thy glory. I give myself to thee, resolved to take thy word as my daily guide, thy people as my companions, and thy ordinances as the means of my spiritual refreshment and progressive edification; and sensible of the weakness of my resolutions, I desire to do all this in the strength of thy promised grace. O make thy grace sufficient for me; and accept through Christ of this dedication. Help me daily to keep in mind that I have thus devoted myself to thee a living sacrifice, and that I am bound to glorify thee with my body and spirit which are thine. May the consideration of this be my guard in the hour of temptation, and my joy in affliction and death. Now, Lord, I call heaven and earth to witness that I am willingly thine. Lord, save thou me.

MARTHA T. SHARP,

In her fifteenth year."

January 1, 1845.

Thus we see, at the early age of fourteen years and a few months, this interesting child not only giving her heart to the Lord Jesus, but subscribing with her hand a devout and solemn covenant to live for him only and wholly. But owing to her tender youth, and the diffidence with which she regarded her own impressions, it was long before she felt authorized to make a public profession of religion. A few extracts from her letters to her friend will show the tenor of her views and feelings during the summer.

To Miss M. I.

"Salem, N. J., May 1, 1845.

. . . . . You do not say any thing about the Saturday concert. I hope you have not forgotten it. I have not: but still remember you before the mercy-seat. I hope, my dear friend, you have not allowed your serious impressions to pass away as the morning dew. Remember how important it is for you to think

of these things before it is too late. I am sure you could not give your friends more pleasure than by consecrating your heart and its best affections to the Lord, and bowing in humble submission at the feet of Jesus.

"This world has many charms for the young; and we who are just entering it, and perhaps look forward to nothing but pleasure, should be fully alive to its temptations, and remember that all we enjoy comes from the Giver of 'every good and perfect gift.' This would chasten our spirit, and fill our hearts with love to God and man.

"Mr. H. is still our pastor. He is about to commence a Bible class. I think I shall attend; for I do not read, much less understand, the scriptures as I ought. They are aptly compared to a deep mine, which yields more the deeper you dig.

MARTHA."

"Salem, N. J., June 7, 1845.

Indeed, my dear Mary, I cannot say much for my *romance.* If you mean a love of the beautiful and grand, I can truly sympathize with you. To see the sublimity of Niagara and the scenery of Switzerland, has always been my desire. I sincerely hope my fondness for the *real* as well as the ideal will never lessen our affection for each other.

". . . . . Now I want you to answer me one question. If you have not forgotten the subject of a letter dated Dec. 31, 1844, you proposed a concert of prayer on Saturday evening. This I have punctually kept. Have you? If you have not neglected either of these, I shall be truly glad. If you have begun to regard them, pursue them at once, and do not banish all serious impressions, *lest they never return.* You have told me all your feelings for a long time. They are always interesting to me.

"MARTHA."

To Miss M. I.

"Salem, N. J., June 30, 1845.

How pleasant it is to have a friend, who you know loves you dearly and disinterestedly; one who will not forsake you on the slightest provocation, but will bear with your little weaknesses. No one values friendship more than I do; and no one feels the loss of it more. A sympathizing, warm-hearted, and devoted friend, is what few know how to value and fewer still possess. I hope I am not mistaken in thinking this inestimable treasure is mine. I look on our intimacy with the most perfect satisfaction. I do not feel the least backwardness to express all my feelings to you; for I know you are worthy of all my confidence. I cannot tell you, my beloved friend, how dear you are to me.

"..... How rapidly time flies, and how miserably do we improve it! When we look at the misspent past, are we more anxious or more careful in view of the future?

Do we strive to live better in consequence of the retrospect? Can we answer these questions with candour in the affirmative? I feel that I am an unprofitable servant, a cumberer of the ground. Why am I spared? Is it for usefulness, or that I may treasure up wrath against the day of wrath? This is an all-important subject. I fear we do not either of us think of it as we ought.

"MARTHA."

TO MY FATHER.

My father, when a little child,
  Thy kindness soothed my sorrow;
Thou wiped'st my tears, and bade me hope
  For pleasure on the morrow.

And as I grew to riper years,
  Whate'er disturbed my heart,
In all my hopes and all my fears,
  Thou ever took'st a part.

When age shall furrow o'er thy brow,
And calm thy youthful fire,
Thy daughter, whom thou lovest now,
Shall sooth in turn her sire.

I'll tend thee with unceasing care,
In sickness and in pain;
And all the love thou gavest me,
I will requite again.

And when the Lord thy soul shall take
From this sad earth away,
Oh! may thy spirit then depart
To realms of endless day.

CHAPTER IV.

"I pray not for this world's vain hope;
The soul desires a larger scope,
Destined to live for ever.
I ask not many years to live,
But that in those THOU will'st to give,
I may forget THEE never."

IN order to afford their daughter advantages superior to those found in a small village, her parents determined to place Martha at school in Philadelphia. This took place in the autumn of 1845. She became a pupil in the school of Miss F. A. Strong, on Washington Square; residing herself in the family of her

grandfather, Edward Smith, Esq. Here she was engaged in the usual employments of a school during the allotted hours; and the remainder of the time was divided between her studies and the company of her relatives. The following testimony from her teacher will sufficiently show the manner in which her duty as a pupil was discharged.

From Miss F. A. Strong.

"Of my dear pupil, Martha, it will give me great pleasure to send you my *general* impressions. I regret extremely that I shall not be able to do more. But our intercourse was almost entirely confined to the school hours; and then we were both too busy to have much time for conversation.

"Martha possessed very quick perceptions, and great facility in acquiring knowledge; so that the studies of her class were not sufficient to occupy her time, and with the addition of French and music, she often thought she had

not enough to do. This aptitude was not, as is often the case, accompanied by superficial views, or habits of carelessness or inattention. On the contrary, she thought deeply, and was uncommonly persevering and industrious. She was decidedly superior, both in talents and acquirements, to most of her companions. I never had a pupil more uniformly attentive to my slightest wish: from the first, a hint upon any point was sufficient.

"When she became a member of the school, I was not aware that Martha had ever considered herself a Christian; though I have since learned that she had. Perhaps new scenes and new duties diminished, for a time, the fervour of religious feeling. But there was a great change in her whole appearance before she left us. It was evident that serious things occupied the first place in her thoughts. The peculiar gentleness of her manner—her meekness in bearing injuries—and her great conscientiousness excited the surprise of the

thoughtless; while her Christian friends recognised, with joy, the fruits of that love to God which was deepening and swelling in her heart. We little thought how soon she would be with the angels!

"I feel that what I have said can be of little service to you; but it may be a gratification to her family to know that her memory *here* is blessed. F. A. Strong."

The introduction of a young person of ardent and susceptible mind into a large city, frequently induces considerable change in the taste, inclination, and habits. Perhaps the reader may infer, from an expression in Miss Strong's letter, that this was the case with Martha. The writer has no desire to represent the fact otherwise than it really was; but he believes that such a supposition would be altogether erroneous. As far as can be known, her individual life went on without any material change. Although, by the position of her friends, she enjoyed the best view of the city,

she was not exposed to its estranging influences. Indeed she had but little affinity for its peculiar manners and spirit. Life, in a large city, seemed to her mind, too artificial. Its refinement appeared to her too frequently akin to dissimulation; while, from its God-forgetting pleasures, and soul-destroying follies, her soul drew back with instinctive abhorrence. The diminution of religious fervour, of which Miss S. speaks, was in part only seeming; and, as far as it was real, depended on causes which she felt and deplored in her journal and correspondence. In the first place, contrary to what she desired, she went to the city without having made a public profession of religion. This placed her at a great disadvantage. She was not recognised as a Christian: she could not, herself, easily assume the posture of one. Her very position was isolated, and having no interchange of views and feelings with other Christians, her own emotions were necessarily confined to herself,

except so far as expressed in a correct deportment, which was always the case. But as soon as her pious schoolmates recognised and addressed her as a Christian, they found a warm and tender response. She could then give expression to the deep and earnest feelings of her heart, and the savour of a living piety could be sensibly discerned when the fetters were removed from her soul.

But Martha did, herself, suppose her soul less prosperous at that period. Not, indeed, because she felt the deadening influence of fashion or gayety, but because she did not enjoy the same means of grace, and the same opportunity of cultivating personal religion. Of this she speaks feelingly in her letters, and also in the following lines written at this time:

"RHYME.

"When the Sabbath comes round with its calmness and rest,
And the church-going bell tells us where to be blest:
When each wends his way to the house of the Lord,
To feast on the blessings that flow from his word;

My heart is borne far from the noise and the strife
Of the large crowded city—its bustle and life,
To my own village church, with its sweet solemn air,
And I hear the low sound of my own pastor's prayer.
Then I melt into tears as the hymns sweetly rise,
In praise to the Eternal, who dwells in the skies.
And Oh! when I see my dear minister stand
And point out the way to the heavenly land,
I feel that the Lord my blest portion shall be;
In Him all enjoyment, all pleasure I see.
But, alas! the illusion is speedily o'er,
I return to the city's confusion once more;
I find that the pleasure such day-dreams afford,
Is disturbed by a laugh, or a sigh, or a word.
And am I condemned now for ever to roam,
Away, far away, from my dear country home?
Oh no, yet a little, I'll go back again,
And forget my long absence, which now causes pain.
Again I will join in the anthems of praise,
Which devoutly those loved ones in unison raise!
And while I rest wholly on Jesus' dear name,
His kingdom's advancement shall be my sole aim.

MARTHA T. SHARP."

A very intelligent lady communicates her impressions of Martha as follows:

"My acquaintance with her was not of long standing. But some circumstances favoured a closer intimacy than could have ordinarily been obtained in so short a time. I was for several weeks indisposed at her grandfather's, and she passed a great deal of her time, when she was not at school, with me in my room, and I can never forget her kindness. She seemed to me to be remarkably staid and sedate for one of her years. Whether this was her natural disposition, I do not know. Her acquaintance with the doctrines of our own church seemed accurate and discriminating, uncommonly so for one so young; and she used frequently to express a strong and decided attachment to the Presbyterian church, saying she could never leave it for any other. We had some conversation on religious subjects, and her views appeared to me very mature. But as she said very little about her personal feelings, I did not then learn that she was experimentally a Christian. The whole

tenor of her behaviour, as far as I saw, was very exemplary.

"Her whole character I regarded as a well balanced and matured one, and it presented itself to me in the distinct traits of solid judgment, united with quick perceptions, an uncommonly retentive memory, and a warm and affectionate heart. Of her pastor she very often talked to me, and always in the most affectionate and enthusiastic terms.

M. P."

The following extracts from her correspondence with her friend, will show the state of her mind at this period:

To Miss M. I.

"Philadelphia, Oct. 1, 1845.

. . . . . "Alas, my dear Mary, you ask me to pray for you. How can my prayers be availing, if you do not pray for yourself? I do pray for you. Every week—nay, oftener, my petitions are directed to the throne

of grace in behalf of one whom I shall always love dearly. Pray for me, and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, *lest he never return.*

MARTHA."

TO THE SAME.

Philadelphia, November 27, 1845.

. . . . . "Do you remember the Saturday concert now? I hope you do. I believe I have never omitted it once since we commenced; and the subject of the letter of December, I hope you will endeavour not to forget. I do not intend ever to forget these things; and they are of too much importance to give them a small place in my heart. They are worthy of *all* my attention, or they are not worthy of *any*. Will you not bear me company? I cannot bear to leave you behind me when so much is at stake. Once, I know, you thought of these things seriously. Do not, Oh! do not neglect them now. I did not feel at liberty to say any thing on the subject when you were here. But will you not tell

me all your *feelings*, all your *hopes*, and all your *fears?*

"I know the world has charms for us. Oh! how important it is that we should choose the good part while we are young, before the sins and temptations of this busy world have fastened themselves upon us! Now, while our hearts are susceptible, before they become hard and insensible; 'now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.'

MARTHA."

The following entry is found on the paper containing the dedication of herself to God.

"*January* 1, 1846.—Another year has passed, and I desire to renew this dedication, with an earnest prayer that I may be kept more in the spirit of it through the coming year. Lord, I am thine. Lord, save thou me, I beseech thee, for thy Son's sake.

M. T. S.

In her sixteenth year."

Salem, New Jersey.

The usual Christmas holydays allowed her to make a brief visit to her parents and friends at home.

To Miss M. I.

Philadelphia, Feb. 28, 1846.

"How can I express to you, my dear Mary, the joy and gratitude I felt on reading your letter? Have you indeed sought and found the Saviour? If so, can it be in answer to my prayers—prayers offered in so much unbelief and faithlessness? Yet it would be doubly unbelieving and faithless to think they had nothing to do with it. Now let me caution you with the importunity of a friend, to rely *wholly* upon God. Do not trust to yourself. Repair often to the throne of grace, and beseech your heavenly Father for the gift of his Holy Spirit. Take his burden upon you and learn of him, for he is meek and lowly in heart. But perhaps it is arrogant in me to advise you, when I so much need advice my-

self. I am afraid I am declining in spiritual things. I feel their importance as much, if not more than ever; but I am not so earnest in my endeavours after holiness as I was. When I was at home, and had my own dear pastor, and sat in our little church listening to the words of eternal life that fell from his beloved lips, I felt willing to devote every thing —my *all* to Christ's service. Now Satan suggests, 'The Lord will not forgive; you have vowed and not paid; you cannot expect mercy.' Oh that I could say with a little boy of whom I once read, 'Mother, God is not angry with me now; I love you, I love every body.' Will you pray for me?

"Have you ever read the memoir of Mary Lundie Duncan? It is a most delightful book, and I am sure you would like it. She was the loveliest character I have ever met with: the nearest being perfect. It is touching to read her journal. The humility and dependence on God there manifested is asto-

nishing. Then she was so beautiful, so intelligent. Too lovely a flower to bloom here; a kind Providence transplanted her to flourish in those regions where sin and sorrow never come. There she rests on the bosom of her Saviour, free from the troubles of this life. No doubt she is casting her crown at his feet, and saying, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.' Oh! my dear Mary, can *we* not follow in the footsteps of this disciple? Let us try.

"Doddridge's 'Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul,' and the 'Great Change,' are highly interesting books. Do read them, if you can procure them, with prayer.

"Would it not be delightful, if we could join the church on the same day? Perhaps you have not thought of it; and yet as you have chosen, you think, the good part, you will profess your faith, I suppose. But *I* have waited long, trembling for fear of deception; and I am still no better. I do not

make progress in the Christian life as I ought. I think I am not fit to make a profession; and yet if I am not fit now, I never shall be. Indeed I never can be *worthy* to partake of the Holy Sacrament. Still, as it is an ordinance of Christ, and a means of strengthening my faith, I shall deem it my duty to connect myself with the church and become a Christian by profession.

MARTHA."

TO THE SAME.

Philadelphia, April 30, 1846.

. . . . "Our happening to have read the same books would have argued some similarity in our tastes, had they been of our own selection. But I had no choice in any but Doddridge's Rise and Progress; the rest were unexpected presents. Our liking them, however, implies that our tastes are alike; and I have reason to hope they are, at least on the subject of religion. We have both given

ourselves to the Saviour, and set out in the path that leads to life. You, I have been told, have professed Christ before men;* and ever since I heard it, I have prayed daily that God would uphold you by his free Spirit. When I first felt my sin and flew to the mercy-seat for relief, you always found a place in my petitions; and since I have hoped I was a child of grace, God alone knows how earnestly I have prayed for your conversion. Now, Oh! *can* I be thankful enough? I cannot express my joy; but I know that our Father can see the depth of my gratitude. I trust the next time we meet, we shall both be members of the visible church; and surely we shall love each other more when we can rejoice in the same Saviour, and feel that 'he is able to keep that which we have committed unto him against that day.' Oh, it is *enough* to make us joyful! Did you ever feel so happy in all your life? Did you ever experience such

* This proved to be a mistake.

peace? If you are at all like me, you *rejoice*, but 'with trembling.' I find so much to retard my progress—so much that binds me down to earth, that *sometimes* I am tempted to give up in despair. But Christ's strength is 'made perfect in my weakness,' and I know he will save me. Do you feel as I do? Tell me all in your next.

MARTHA."

Since her death, a small manuscript volume has been found, containing a journal begun while at school in Philadelphia. The memoranda are entered at irregular, and often distant intervals, just as a spare moment was found; and occasionally she seems to have been interrupted in the very midst of an entry. She states that she had been accustomed for some time previous, to write brief notices in pencil, on detached slips of paper. These were probably destroyed from time to time. Her object in giving it a more permanent

form, she states thus: "that I may be able to judge more correctly of my real character, to advance in holiness, and to correct that which is amiss." Brief and hasty as these notes are, they give interesting and vivid glimpses of what was going on in her experience.

"*May* 18, 1846.—To-day I have done many wrong things which must be corrected. Oh, for more grace! I got up too late this morning; I must try to wake at five to-morrow. The first thing when I rise is, to kneel and thank God for his mercies, and entreat a continuation of them. By six, my dressing and all will be done; I will then study till breakfast, and after breakfast till school-time. I must be careful to avoid smiling in school. My father came to town to-day. Gracious Saviour, be with him and bless him."

"*Tuesday, May* 19, 1846. I got up too late this morning. I wish I could wake earlier; and hope I may succeed to-morrow. I was more careful to-day in school; and yet in

my most watchful moments, how many things I do that are wrong. I took my Music lesson this afternoon; have not wasted much time to-day. Miss Strong wrote me a note to-day; I love her much, she is so very kind. Father and aunts went to hear Mr. Gough, the famous temperance lecturer; but my head ached so badly, that I did not go. I fear I spoke impatiently to E. to-day. I must pray to be more Christ-like. Oh! I am all sin and uncleanness. Gracious Redeemer, purify me by thine own blood. Wash me, and I shall be clean.

Wednesday, May 20, 1846. I did not get up at five this morning; to-morrow I must make a double effort. At school as usual to-day—knew all my lessons—my conduct proper so far as I know.

"I have spoken impatiently and felt angry to-day. Oh that I could control myself more. Blessed Saviour, when will I be like thee? Father in heaven, help me to do right—teach

me by thy word. 'Open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.' "

Thursday, May 21, 1846.—To-day much as usual. Missed my history lesson—rather uncommon, but every one fails sometimes. I *must* wake at five to-morrow. S. E., M. N., and E. here this evening. I am sorry to say that I spoke impatiently; with some cause, it is true, but still I ought to be more careful. Oh! that I might be perfectly amiable. I fear that few would think me a child of God. And am I?—I will not doubt the mercy of God. He has promised, and will he not perform? I feel miserable to-night. Omitted reading this morning. All comes of over-sleeping myself."

Sunday, May 24, 1846. I went to bed earlier last night on purpose to wake early, but did not succeed. I hope I shall to-morrow. Heard Dr. Krebs, of New York, preach this morning. In the afternoon Mr. Moore, a gentleman who was licensed at Salem, [five

years previously,] preached an excellent discourse from the text,—'Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful.' Oh! may *I* attend first to the one thing needful.

Much to my disappointment, M—— came in and stayed all the evening. I endeavoured to make it profitable, but only with partial success. I knew it was not right to spend Sabbath hours in that manner. But aunt did not think it was advisable for me to say so. I will try to avoid it, if spared, till another Sabbath. I do so many things wrong that I almost despair of forgiveness. My heart is wrong. I must return to God more fully this very night and beseech his forgiveness."

Monday, May 25th, 1846.—Rose at five; had much freedom and earnestness in prayer. But how many sins have I to mourn over! Alas, that my heart is so hard—so full of unbelief. Have suffered exceedingly from headache to-day. But I must not repine. God

chastens me for good, and I will bow submissively to his will. I have endeavoured to act aright to-day. Have not heard from home for some time, but hope I shall soon. I must bear the dear ones there oftener to the mercy-seat. Oh, that they may be all born again! The state of religion is low in Salem. Lord, revive thy work and pour out a blessing. The rain has cooled the air. Lord, I thank thee that the oppressive heat has abated."

"*Wednesday evening, June 3d*, 1846.—Heard Rev. Mr. Palmer preach from the text —'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' A most searching sermon. Oh, that I might profit by it! But I am so cold and have so many sins to mourn over." "I am trying (Oh, how hard!) to do right; and yet I am all sin and pollution. I trust in Jesus' dear name for pardon and sanctification. Mary I. has not joined the church: it was a mistake: I am sorry to hear it was not true."

The last remark has reference to the friend to whom she felt so tender an attachment, and for whose conversion she longed and prayed so earnestly. There had been an interesting revival in the congregation where her friend resided; and through some mistake she had been told that Miss I. was one of its subjects. The reader has already seen the transport of joy and gratitude with which she received the intelligence. A letter now undeceived her, and the sentence above records the sorrowful disappointment. Her feelings are better expressed in a letter to the young lady herself.

"Philadelphia, June 1, 1846.

"And is it possible, my own beloved Mary, is it *possible* that you love novel-reading more than heaven—more than God—more than your Saviour? Can you reflect on this all-important subject; can you consider it fully, and yet cling to the paltry pleasures of a silly

story? Suppose you were to die—yes, my dearest Mary, *die*—what would it profit you? Oh! how would you feel when, standing before the bar of God, you heard your Saviour saying—'you have despised my mercy, slighted my love; depart from me into everlasting darkness?' I entreat you to consider this. Will you not—Oh! will you not receive Christ as your Saviour? *He* is an all-sufficient, an ever-willing and merciful Redeemer; who will take you to his bosom and give you grace to act a better part. Oh! how shall I tell you my grief at hearing you are not determined to serve the Lord. I cannot urge any more effectual reasons. I cannot tell you how much I desire you to be a lamb of Christ's flock. But I *can* pray for you, and that I most certainly will do.

"I do not read novels. I think it would be wrong. When my mind is mature—when I can turn from a romance to the Bible with as much delight; then, and then only, will I

indulge in novel-reading. And can I not persuade you to make the same resolution? Go to the throne of grace, and lay your whole heart before God. Confess *little* sins, sins of thought as well as of deed. Think not it is too much trouble, but tell your heavenly Father every thing; and relying on his strength, go forth with the firm determination to serve the Lord. Consecrate yourself unreservedly to him, and may the Spirit of all truth overshadow you and lead you in the way of life.

"My cousins are in the parlour, and I am in the dining-room. A letter to a dear, kind friend occupies me; the piano them. I prefer my employment. I will *remember* you more particularly in our Saturday concert; and as for myself, pray that I may love Christ and hate sin more. Mary, my prayers will do no good, unless seconded by yours. But I hope that you will remain cold no longer, but consecrate the morning of your days to Him who bought you with his own precious blood.

MARTHA."

Reference has been already made to the constraint laid upon her feelings when she first entered school in Philadelphia. After a time, however, she found a few of her fellow pupils like-minded with herself on the subject of religion; and their souls were immediately knit together as the soul of David and Jonathan. With two, at least, of these, she held a free and confidential correspondence by means of little notes. These were written hastily, with pencil, in leisure moments; but they reveal the serious, earnest, and devout character of her religious feelings. Her teachers, also, interested for her spiritual welfare, made such approaches to her on the subject as caused her to disclose the state of her mind to them. One of them put into her hands with a note, James' Anxious Inquirer, which she read, and returned with the following answer.

"My dear Miss L.,

"I fear it is presuming in me to write to you without an invitation. But I feel too deeply

the kindness that induced you to lend me the book I return, not to thank you for it. Although I hope that I am not now only 'the Anxious Inquirer,' still I found it no ineffectual guide in leading me to look only to Jesus. I liked the chapter headed 'Perplexities of Inquirers,' particularly; and though I found some parts not peculiarly applicable to me, it was, on the whole, a book I very much needed. I read it as you requested, seriously and prayerfully, with attention to the directions in the preface, and must again gratefully acknowledge the kindness which led you to offer it to me.

"I have a friend, whom I think seriously inclined. With your permission I should like to lend it to her; and if I do not ask too much, I should be exceedingly obliged for another note to

Your affectionate pupil,

MARTHA T. SHARP."

One of her schoolmates, Miss Elizabeth D., of whom her teacher speaks as "an interesting young Christian," addressed her a note on the subject of their experimental views and feelings. After an apology for the seeming abruptness of the correspondence, and a hope that Martha would not like her less for the liberty she was taking, she says: "It was with great pleasure that I learned you had become a Christian. (Miss S. told me.) We are now, if indeed believers, sisters in Christ." She then inquires of Martha respecting the personal comfort of her religious experience; stating that contrary to what she anticipated before her conversion, her own joy had been mingled with a painful sense of remaining imperfection and sin, and that she could feel comfortable only in a trusting dependence on Christ. After speaking of prayer, in which she advises her friend to employ an audible voice, the note concludes with a few words of encouragement, fortified

by pertinent texts of scripture. To this note Martha gave the following reply.

"My dear Lizzy,

I do love you more for the note you wrote me, and take the earliest opportunity of answering it. I have hoped I was a Christian, and for several years have been very serious. But I am continually fearful of being deceived; and every day I see so much wickedness in my heart, that I often think I am not a child of God. Often I do not want to pray. Are you not shocked, dear Lizzy? Never mind, I will tell you. I sometimes feel a disinclination to prayer, and when I do pray, it seems as though it was no prayer at all. Did *you* ever feel so? I do not suppose you ever did: but perhaps you will not dislike it that I have told you about it. I have often felt great relief in praying aloud; but here [in the city] I can seldom have an opportunity to do so for fear of being heard. At home I can

go away to a little room adjoining mine, and no one is near but God. *Then* I can pour out my whole heart to him; and when I rise, I feel happier and holier. I enjoy it very much; and this makes me think I am a Christian. Besides I have given myself to God, and he has promised to receive me. There can be no presumption in taking him at his word. I do not feel *perfectly* happy; but I feel happier than when I thought God was angry with me. You are young, Lizzy, and I think you not inconsistent. You know how far you have tried to do right, and God looketh at the heart. Perhaps we can help each other. Wo'n't you please answer me very soon?

Yours affectionately,

MARTHA."

The other notes of Miss D. have not been found. But the following written by Martha to her, will show the character of their intercourse.

To Miss E. D.

"My dear Libby,

I have not entirely forgotten to write to you; but I have so many other things to do, that I am often at a loss for time. I am sensible, deeply sensible, of the solemnity of devoting myself entirely to the Saviour; and I scarcely think any one could regard it in a more serious light than I do. But then as Christ commanded us to acknowledge Him before men—and I know he never commands any thing that we cannot do—I think we ought to obey him. I am always afraid of dishonouring him. Or if I have been deceived, and am still 'in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity,' the thought of it makes me shudder. I earnestly desire holiness; and it must be God who is 'working in me both to will and to do.' I will trust him; and if I perish, will perish at his feet.

Yours affectionately,

Martha."

To the Same.

"My dear Lizzy,

"I have kept the book longer than I intended, but I hope you have not needed it. I am sitting by the open window, and I can look out on quite a large and pretty yard before it. The air is cool and delightful; the sun is just shedding his departing rays on the opposite buildings; and I cannot help raising my heart up to God in gratitude for his many mercies. Oh! Lizzy, there *are* times when I surrender myself entirely to Jesus; when, placing my all in his hands, and accepting him as my all-atoning Saviour, I can say—'*my* Lord and *my* God.' No doubt you have often felt so; and was it not—*next* to the time when you first believed yourself a child of God—the happiest moment of your life? Do you not love at the close of the day to verify that most beautiful hymn, the first stanza of which is—

"'I love to steal awhile away
From every cumbering care;
And spend the hours of setting day,
In humble *melting* prayer.'

"A Christian indeed must have written that sweet hymn; and none but a Christian can feel its whole touching import. There is something very delightful in going to God with freedom, and telling him all our sorrows and trials—in casting *all* our care on him who careth for us. These are moments of almost too much joy; but how soon, how very soon do they often pass away, and leave us to mourn over that sin which estranges us from our God. Yet while we mourn sincerely for our guilt, surely it is a test of our religion. I could not write in this manner to you, but that I think you can sympathize with me. That chapter is *very* precious.* Trials and temptations await me, I know; and to whom

* One to which her friend had probably referred in her note.

but Christ can I go *then?* Lizzy, answer me one question—a question of deep importance to *me*—one of such moment that I feel oppressed when I think of it. You have seen me this winter; you *know*, at least you have seen my imperfections; and *do* you think I ought to join the church? Please answer me soon, Libby.

Affectionately,

MARTHA."

"The following note was written by her at a time when there was a little persecution in the school. I think it speaks a Christian's heart; and it is my firm belief that Martha was a Christian, and is now happy in heaven.

ELIZABETH D."

"MY DEAR LIBBY,

I have but a word to say, for time is short. You know that Christians are often reproached on account of their religion. 'Blessed are ye when all men shall speak evil of you falsely

for my sake,' is a comforting passage. Look to Jesus in *this* trial; and if you think you have done entirely right, you will be satisfied. I would take no notice of those girls who taunt you. Bear and forbear is a precious motto. O that *I* could practise it.

Your sympathizing friend,

MARTHA."

To MISS E. D.

"MY DEAR LIBBY,

I was very glad to get your note; and hope, with you, that a kind Providence ordered for your good what has passed. God does all things well; and if in every trying dispensation, we recognised *his* hand, would it not make us patient and humble? 'Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word,' is language not confined to the sweet Psalmist of Israel. Besides, affliction is a proof of God's affection. He 'chasteneth every son whom he receiveth.' I did sympathize with you, dear E.: I know you can-

not very well conceal your feelings, and I saw that any taunts would hurt you very much. But now, it is all over; and I do hope it has not been in vain for any of us.

Your affectionate friend,

MARTHA."

The following notes were written in the same manner, and during the same period to Miss Louisa B., another of her schoolmates. The notes of Miss B., to which these are replies, except one, have not been found; but the import of them can be inferred from the language of these.

To MISS L. B.

"No, my dear Louisa, I am not a *professing* Christian; but I hope I am one in heart, and may be one soon by profession. Your question was not regarded as impertinent. I was not aware that you were a member of the church.

Yours affectionately,

MARTHA."

To the Same.

"My dear Louisa,

Nothing could have given me more pleasure, than the opportunity of writing to you a note on so interesting a subject. As I know your time is very much occupied, I will send this first, in hopes of a speedy answer. For four years this spring, I have been the subject of serious impressions. I have not intentionally resisted them. On the contrary I have always felt willing to become a Christian—not only willing, but anxious. At one time I was on the eve of connecting myself with the church; but unforeseen circumstances prevented me. I do not know but it was for the best. Sometimes I have felt as though my heart were so hard that I could not be a Christian. Then, again, I have been willing to give up every thing, and would melt into tears at the thought of my Saviour dying for *me*. Thus I have continued vacillating between two opinions:—and now the solemn

question is, am I a Christian? I have given myself to Christ; but often have I vowed and not paid, and Oh! my unbelief—I fear that is the grand obstacle. In short, I know how often Christ has invited me to come; and though every day on my bended knees I implore his Holy Spirit and plead his promises, I do not love him as I ought. I do not hate sin as I ought. Oh! the sinfulness, the hardness of my heart. I can cry out, in the language of inspiration, 'How long, O Lord! how long?' Pray for me that I may be led in the right way, and at last saved through the merits of Christ. Do you think under such circumstances I ought to join the church? Of course no one, not even A., will see these notes.

Yours affectionately,

MARTHA."

In her reply to this note her friend says, "I feel utterly incompetent to advise you. If you should not be so happy, nor make the

progress you desire, do not be discouraged, but persevere in your determination to serve the Lord. Examine yourself and see if you have truly repented of sin, and are indeed desirous to lead a new life. But, Martha, you must not look to yourself for encouragement; for you will daily become sensible of your own weakness. But look to Jesus. He has said, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' Have you made known your feelings to any one? I think you should consult a suitable adviser. If you feel that you are a Christian, it is undoubtedly your duty to confess your Saviour before men, as he has commanded. That you may be enabled to live a life of faith, and at last be received by Christ into his kingdom, prays your sincere friend.

LOUISA."

"MY DEAR LOUISA,

I was very glad to receive an answer to your note so soon; especially as you have so little time. I am very much obliged to you

for it. I know all the promises you repeated to me; and as I told you, it is my unbelief that prevents me from receiving them. I do not mean that I do not believe they are true. No, far from it. I know they *are* true; but I do not derive suitable benefit from them as yet. God, I tremblingly hope, has begun a good work in me; but how am I to be sure it is not a delusion of Satan. You say that you are not competent to advise me, and that I ought to consult one who is. But I have a strange reluctance to speak to any such person. Mr. Helm, our pastor at Salem, has often spoken to me on the subject, and asked me to tell him my feelings. But I could not do so: it was an impossibility. I have tried to speak, but it seemed as though I had not the power. I can write about my feelings; but when I attempt to tell them to any one whom I feel to be so much superior to me as he is, I am so agitated as to render it impossible for me to proceed. I tell you all this

in confidence, Louisa; for I feel it is better for me to tell some one, and as you are the only one of my Christian companions that ever spoke to me on the subject, I do not know but it is well for me to do it. Can a person be a Christian and do as I sometimes do? I will explain myself. At times, when I rise in the morning, I feel no inclination to pray. I think I have no time. I will do it, I say, after awhile. School time arrives, and I have not yet sought my God. Yet I do not feel the compunction I ought. Sometimes I pray when in this frame, but it is not *prayer*. Then, at times, I feel no inclination to go to church on week days here. (It was not so when my pastor preached.) It is not often this is the case; I wish I could say never. Then I sometimes give way to my temper; and I would give nothing for the Christianity which does not make one more amiable. I do not think I trust to myself. I know I can do nothing without God. But every day I

become more sensible of my sinfulness, and I cannot tell what to do. God, I know, can make my heart new, and I hope and trust he will. I will pray, and watch, and hope that I may be enabled to become a Christian. Do not let any one see this, and answer me as soon as possible.

MARTHA."

"MY DEAR LOUISA,

I intended to write to you to-day, before I received your note; and I suppose it will not be less acceptable for coming so soon after yours. As I know you are occupied, and often unable to find time for writing, I intend never to wait. I am not so unhappy as I was. I trust I have given myself entirely to God; and I believe that Jesus is not only able but willing to save *me*. There surely can be no presumption in taking him at his word. He says, 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' He died for sinners:

he offers to save them. I am a sinner; he died to save me. He offers me salvation; I am willing to receive it; I embrace him with my whole heart; I surrender every thing to him with the full persuasion that as he has promised so he will perform. I doubt not he has received me. As far as I know my own heart, I am devoted to him, willing to die for him, if need be. I feel my unworthiness deeply; but his righteousness overbalances it. I have stated my feelings to you: am I right? As to making known my feelings to my pastor, I shall do so when I join the church; which I feel it is my duty to do. I am sincerely obliged to you for your interest in me. I have read "the Anxious Inquirer," and trust it was a valuable guide to me. Write soon.

MARTHA."

"MY DEAR LOUISA,

I was just on the point of writing to you to ask whether you had given up writing to me,

when I received your note. I hope that I *shall* persevere in well-doing. I know that of myself I can do nothing; but Christ's strength is perfect in my weakness. I am not so happy as I expected to be; for I find within me much sin, and I have continually to fight against my indwelling corruption. Although often my heart would persuade me not to pray, and though Satan insinuates I am not a Christian, still while I feel myself walking quite another way, new desires, new affections, love for things I once hated, an overwhelming sense of sin and hatred of it, and love for Christ; can I doubt that the grace of God has renewed my heart? I am endeavouring to do right, and hope that I may have a part in the kingdom of heaven. I cannot but think that God has forgiven my sins; it would be charging him with deception not to believe his promises. Good bye, dear Louisa. Write soon.

MARTHA."

"Really, dear L., I have been too negligent, not to have answered your kind note before. But believe me, it was not wilful. I have not had time; and even now I might be studying my history lesson. I hope and trust I am doing as far right, as my poor sinful heart allows me. I *do* believe Christ is *my* Saviour, and can say with Thomas, '*My* Lord, and *my* God.' Good bye, Louisa. Answer my necessarily short note by a long one very soon.

MARTHA."

"MY DEAR LOUISA,

"I have not forgotten to write to you; but my time is so occupied that I can only spare a minute now and then. You are very kind to take so much interest in me; but I think I can sympathize in your earnest desire to have all your friends Christians. It *is* the *great* thing. God alone knows how anxiously I wish that my companions could sympathize with me; and how often I have longed to find

some one who felt as I feel. I fear that time is far distant. I do not believe any one was ever so sinful as I am. There may have been such; but they cannot have felt that almost utter hopelessness which sometimes depresses me. O what would I not have given, had I possessed a friend to whom I might have told my sorrow. I forget that I have a Friend —a Friend who has commanded us to tell him every thing; and now that I have found him I can rejoice. But I am often prone to fear I am not a Christian. I know I am not such as I ought to be. But I have felt my need of a Saviour, and so longed for him, that now, although vile and sinful, I cannot relinquish the hope that Christ is indeed my Saviour.

Your friend,

MARTHA."

"MY DEAR LOUISA,—

I do not suppose I can long have the pleasure of writing to you. The holydays

are fast approaching, and then, you know, I am going home, and perhaps I may never see you again. I have all your notes; and it will be very pleasant to read them over and think of my school days in Philadelphia. The other day Mr. Adams, a minister who stayed at my uncle's during the General Assembly, gave me Hodge's 'Way of Life,' and inside was a little note, which you may read if you would like to do so. Did you tell Miss Strong about my interest in religion? She said she had heard it; but did not tell me from whom. I could not think of any one but you; but perhaps more know it than I thought. I feel a little sorrowful that I am going to leave you all so soon; but I dislike to be away from home too much to come back next year. And now, dear Louisa, I wish to consult you about my joining the church. Do you think I ought to join it when I go home; or should I wait longer? Do *you* observe any change in me? Do you suppose any one would think

me to be governed by the high and holy motives of love to God, and love to man? I feel my constant sinfulness, my great proneness to do wrong; but Christ is an all-sufficient and an ever-present Saviour. Are you not tired of me? Answer soon.

Your friend,

MARTHA."

CHAPTER V.

"There is a magic in the name of home,
A charm which even the callous bosom knows,
And Oh! when from its precincts dear we roam,
How brightly each loved scene in memory glows."

"A home—that paradise below,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Where hallowed joys perennial flow,
By calm, sequestered bowers."

The reader has already seen the strength of Martha's home feelings. She loved her friends, her teachers, and her studies; but her heart turned with constant longings to her

310862

'own country home.' There were her parents and their other children. Her church, her Sunday school, her pastor were there; and there was her heart also. It was therefore with almost an ecstasy of delight, that on the last day of June, she returned to the bosom of her family, and to the scenes she loved so well. Owing to the state of her mother's health, it became necessary for her to assume part of the cares of the family; and by this means a considerable portion of her time was occupied in domestic duties during the summer and autumn. On this account a long interruption occurred in her journal, and for two or three months her letters to her friends were sparing. She still maintained her correspondence with her early school mate.

To Miss M. I.

"Salem, August 1, 1846.

. . . . "How true is the adage, 'every year flies faster;' and Oh! how important it

is, that we should improve the little period that is left, and fit ourselves for a holier and happier existence. I am sorry, very sorry, you imagine you cannot give up novel-reading. You *can*, my dear Mary, and you *must*. Some time you will have to do so. You cannot carry novels to the grave; and in the untried world, the long eternity to which we are hastening, there are no sensual pleasures. Think on these things. Place before you the good and the evil, and choose speedily to renounce a right eye or a right hand sin, rather than spend your life in the paltry gratification of novel-reading, and in treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

"Forgive my speaking so plainly, and do not think I mean to dictate. You are not *happy*, because you are not *holy*. Perfect happiness is not our lot here below. In this vale of tears, sorrow and trouble must come, and only in heaven can we be perfectly blessed. There, no suffering, no parting, no

tears disturb its inhabitants; but in the light of the Lord, the Lamb, they find that peace which the world can neither give nor take away.

MARTHA."

The following notices will show how religion mingled in her views and feelings with every tie and incident.

"*September* 6, 1846.—Since I last wrote, (in her journal,) a sweet little brother has come to gladden us. How fervently ought we to pray that God would early call the sweet bud to partake of the blessings of his salvation, and shed the graces of his Spirit on his tender heart. Oh! that he may become, indeed, an heir of the promises."

"*September* 7, 1846. On Friday, Mr. Helm returned from Newport, his health extremely delicate. He has an internal tumour in his side which, father thinks, arises from seden-

tary habits. I am afraid we shall not have him long; but I will hope for the best. My beloved pastor, my kind spiritual father, how can I thank him enough for all his kindness! Yesterday morning he preached, but the heat was enough to overcome any one in health. Last evening he spoke impressively of the wrath of God *now* abiding on the impenitent sinner. Oh! how carefully should we examine ourselves that we may be sure to escape that anger! Does it rest on my head? I trust the righteousness of Christ has dispelled the cloud, and now I am cheered by the smiles of a reconciled God. . . Mary I. is in a dreadful state of mind. What am I to do? I can pray—and pray for her I must. When shall *I* be more like Christ? Lately I have enjoyed more peace, and, I trust, know *some little* of that joy which is unspeakable. But all my desires are cold and languid; and I long to reach that blessed rest which remains for the people of God. There in the blaze of

eternal day, where every one is holy and happy, and the Lamb is the light and the glory: in that heaven I shall be happy in tuning my voice to the new song, and in striking my harp to the praise of Him that was slain.

"I am a Sunday School teacher, and I feel deeply—but not near enough—the solemn responsibility which rests on me. May I be enabled to discharge faithfully the duties of my office!

"A solemn question is—ought I to commune? I would join the church, but I am still so sinful that I fear my friends would not be willing. Yet God, who knows my heart, knows that my whole soul is in religion, and that I do desire to live for Him, and Him only. 'Lord, decide the doubtful case.'

"*Sept.* 13, 1846.—I have felt, for some time past, a desire to tell Mr. Helm what I felt, and Saturday evening I wrote to him stating how earnestly I desire to serve the Lord, how un-

worthy and sinful I felt myself, and asked his advice as to joining the church. I gave it to Mrs. H. on Sunday morning, and very kindly he answered it right away, so that I received a long answer from him in the evening."

The following is the letter to which allusion is made above:

"My dear Pastor,

I have made many ineffectual attempts to speak to you of the state of my mind; but I find it entirely impossible to converse about my own feelings. To you, of all others, I desire to make them known; for I have had sufficient reason to think you are interested for my eternal welfare. I take the liberty of writing to you that which I can never find confidence to say. I do not remember having resisted the influences of the Spirit at all; but have always felt anxious to become a Christian. That Sunday night you conversed with

me and urged me to go, just as I was, to a merciful Saviour, saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," I endeavoured to do so. I gave myself entirely to the Saviour. I renounced every thing worldly, and consecrated every thing to God.

When I think how often I have broken that solemn vow, how feebly I have tried to live as a Christian, I almost despair, and am afraid no one would think I had set out in the 'way of life.' But I *do* love the Saviour: I am anxious to renounce every thing and follow Him.

I need advice, and feel that you are willing to give it. I cannot thank you enough for your kindness to me; neither can I tell you how gratefully and affectionately I always think of you. Do you think I ought to join the church? I have felt my unworthiness almost too much to think of it; but I do long to commune with you, and I feel that the ordinance was instituted for such as I. Often I

do very wrong things, which I wonder at. This discourages me. Do advise me. Will you forgive my silence when you have spoken to me on this subject? Indeed it was not unwillingness to tell you all, but my feelings always overpowered me too much to answer you. May I ask your prayers?

MARTHA."

Seeing no reason to doubt that the work in her heart was of God's Spirit, I sought to obviate her difficulties, and to encourage her in the step she had so much at heart. Of this, she speaks in her journal as follows:

"My pastor says he thinks I am entitled to the privilege. . . . I do feel my sinfulness. But I have given myself to the Saviour; I do love Him; I am determined to live for Him, and Him only. Perhaps it may be better to wait; but I long to commune. I have waited already, but my anxious inquiry is, will I succeed by longer delay? Am I a Christian,

or am I not? I cannot doubt the mercy of God. 'My grace is sufficient for thee,' is the promise.

'Oh! that I had a stronger faith,
To look beyond the vale;
To credit what my Saviour saith,
Whose word can never fail.'"

Oct. 1, 1845.—She writes to her friend, Miss M. I., as follows:

"You must know that since my last letter, we have had a dear little brother added to our family circle; and the duties which such a pleasant event never fail to bring with it, have confined me very much. I laughingly say that he was my birth-day present, for he was born on the morning of my sixteenth year. How I wish you could see him. *I* think he is pretty; but a fond sister cannot see impartially, and from all I can learn of other babies, his appearance is not at all uncommon. But I do think his eyes are beautiful. They are

'deeply, darkly, beautifully blue,' the perfect azure of a clear summer sky; and they look at you so cunningly, that you fairly love him for their sakes. Now you may consider yourself flattered that I have talked so much about him, for I take it for granted you are interested in all *my* affairs. Are you not, dear Mary? I can imagine your silent assent. I will carry the question farther, and ask, will you *please* to be interested in all I am going to say, and weigh it carefully before you throw it aside, perhaps, for ever?

"You ask me about dancing; and perhaps you will think me too strict when I tell you, that *as a Christian*, I *cannot* approve of it. It is perfectly consistent with the character and aims of those who profess to live only for this world. But for those who, having 'cast away the works of darkness,' are *pressing forward* 'to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,' to countenance and *enjoy* it, is wrong, decidedly

wrong. I do not speak of the 'charm of so light and graceful an amusement.' I suppose, in itself considered, and as an exercise, there is probably no harm in it. But could a Christian go from prayer to a dance? Or could he return from it and with a peaceful and happy heart, bow before Him who is of pure eyes, and cannot look upon sin but with abhorrence? Ah! my Mary, think of it in this light. Do not parley at the positive amount of harm it contains. But reflect upon the high calling of a Christian. Think of the glorious home to which he is hastening, and for which he is preparing; of the Saviour, the saints and angels with whom he is to live eternally; and answer me conscientiously, does this amusement advance him one step in his life of preparation? Does it make him any more meet for the kingdom of heaven? Does it not rather lead him away from God, and fix his affections on this world? Oh! how anxiously do I wish you to think as I do! You are not

happy, and it grieves me to find it so. The tears that are in my eyes now, are not the first that I have shed for you; and the prayer with which I have written this letter, is one of a thousand of the same character. Your *only* happiness in novels and company! Oh! do, do seek for a better kind. Go, I beseech you, to your heavenly Father; confess your sins: say, 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.' Give him your whole heart: renounce every sin, taking up every duty: solemnly dedicate yourself to God, and Oh! may the God of grace help you to keep his laws! The Saviour is waiting to be gracious. Can you, will you, refuse to accept his proffered mercy? I am distressed for you. Do, Oh! please do, give yourself to the Saviour. My time will not permit me to write longer; but if you will only do this, you will experience that peace which passeth all understanding. God bless you, my dear Mary—God in his mercy bless you.

"P. S.—Oct. 2. The synod of New Jersey will meet at Trenton on the 20th of this month. Mr. Helm is going, and would willingly take charge of me if I could go. It would be very delightful, for then I could get to see you. But father and mother do not seem willing, and I must relinquish the thought. It is a disappointment, but then it is all for the best. Is it not sweet to feel that your heavenly Father is making *every thing* work together for good? Then indeed you can bow submissively to his will, and give up every thing to his disposal. We must expect trials here, and how happy we are if we can say,

> 'Tis my happiness below,
> Not to live without the cross,
> But the Saviour's power to know
> *Sanctifying every loss.*'

"I wish you knew Mr. Helm; he is so good, so kind, so gentle. I am sure if he was my father, I could not love him more. If you

could have seen his benevolent eye, and heard the sweet tones of his voice when he conversed with me about religion, and if you could see him in the pulpit and listen to him preaching, you would love him too. He has been very kind to me; and I do not believe I could have been what I am, had it not been for his influence. I have much, very much to tell you, if I could only *see* you. Write soon, dearest Mary, without waiting the whole month; and do tell me that you are differently occupied. Be happy, dear Mary; you can, and I fondly hope you will.

MARTHA."

"*October* 3.—This afternoon I attended the preparatory lecture before the communion. Mr. Helm preached from the text, 'Sanctify yourselves, for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you.' He said it was not the mere verbal application of the words to the occasion, that had induced him to select

this text. It involved this general principle, that when we desire and expect special manifestations of divine grace to our souls, we should be in a suitable posture to obtain and receive the blessing. O! that the Lord would pour his Spirit upon us here, and bless our pastor's labours! Mr. H. lent me "Russell's Letters," which I find very interesting. May they prove useful to me. I think, on the whole, I live nearer to God than usual. I find it very comforting to commit every thing into his hands, and trust his grace completely.

"On last Sunday Barbara was removed to Miss H. Hancock's class. I hope the change may be useful. It was a trial to part with my best scholar, but I was enabled to acquiesce. I have now ——. She is rather volatile, but I hope she may be benefited. —— is an interesting little girl. I trust the Saviour will call her by his grace. —— is very backward. I must endeavour to instruct her faithfully. —— and —— appear to be nice

children! O that they may all give their hearts to God! Blessed Saviour, fit me for my duty, and enable me to perform it aright.

"The steamer Great Western encountered a terrible storm on her last passage to New York. Dr. Scott, Mr. Helm's friend, was on board. The scene must have been superlatively awful. How agonizing must have been the feelings of those who were without God in the world, and how painfully must they have listened to every boding sound! But those who had the blessed hope of life and a glorious immortality beyond the grave, must have felt then the value of that grace which robs death of its sting.

"*Oct.* 17, 1846. Contrary to my expectations, father has given his consent that I shall go to Trenton with Mr. H., and on Monday we start. May the services of Synod be useful to me; and may I do some good! Lord, be with and bless me. I may see Mary I. Blessed Saviour, lead her unto a perfect know-

ledge of thy will. I trust I am making daily progress; though to-day my thoughts have been set too much on things below. To-morrow is the blessed Sabbath: I am trying to prepare for it. Oh! that it may be pleasant to me! Lord, forgive all my sins, and love me freely for thy mercy and thy truth's sake."

According to her desire, Martha accompanied her pastor to Trenton, and was present at the meeting of Synod. Her regard for the ministers of Christ, her interest in all that pertained to the prosperity of the Church, and her delight in religious exercises, rendered this visit peculiarly gratifying. She attended even the business sessions of the body with so much punctuality, and took so much interest in all its proceedings, that the friends with whom she stayed pleasantly rallied her upon her zeal. In a letter to a friend, she says, "You are perhaps aware that our Synod met in Trenton this year. I went with Mr. H., and had a most delightful time. I heard

Dr. J. Addison Alexander preach." . . . . . "At the late meeting of the Presbytery of West Jersey, various committees of ministers were appointed to visit the several churches within its jurisdiction, in order to awaken some religious interest." In her journal, "Nov. 11, 1846. Miss E. was here this morning, and we had a delightful conversation. She says that Drs. Chester and Van Rensselaer are coming to endeavour to awaken some religious interest. Oh! thou blessed Spirit, do thou work here: shed on us thy transforming influence. I must make it a special object of prayer that their visit may be blessed. Dear Mr. Helm, how I wish the people would love him more! His body is wasting rapidly. Oh dear, if I could only make them think as I do;—could make them love, revere, and consult him. However, as long as I live, I will do all I can for him.

"*Nov.* 16, 1846. To-day the sun shone once more. How pleasant again to see his

rays! May the Sun of Righteousness arise to me with healing in his wings! Yesterday morning Mr. Helm preached from Peter's denial—the Saviour's look—Peter's repentance: a truly affecting sermon to me. In the evening he preached from the text, *Grow in grace.* It ought to occasion great heart-searchings. I trust I am slowly making progress.

'Often I find my sinful heart,
Prone from my Saviour to depart.'

But He who called me by his grace, has still made that grace sufficient for me. For ever blessed be his holy name! Let all the people say, Amen."

To Miss M. I.

"Salem, N. J., December 1, 1846.

". . . . . Last evening there was a special prayer-meeting in the church, for the descent of the Holy Spirit upon us, and it was a very solemn occasion. During the late sessions of

our Presbytery, Drs. Chester and Van Rensselaer were appointed a committee to visit us and endeavour to awaken some religious interest here. They are expected to-day, and to-night there will be service. Oh that the Lord would visit us and bless us. Pray for us.

"I feel myself incapable of advising you, dear Mary; but are you not unwilling to give yourself wholly to the Saviour? God's Holy Spirit does not generally influence the heart very suddenly: it is usually a gradual thing. You should not expect to feel *all* at once—every thing you wish. The Spirit of God is convincing you now of your sin. You *are* a *great* sinner, Mary. You are not in much danger of feeling too keenly the turpitude of your guilt; and the awful conviction of it should lead you with a broken and contrite heart to seek for mercy and forgiveness through the precious blood of Christ. That peace-speaking blood cleanseth from all sin,

however aggravated: and oh! my beloved Mary, trust in it entirely. You are not required to feel penitent and very much inclined to be pious, as a sort of warrant to go to God. Do not wait for right feelings. Go to your closet,—confess all your sins,—entreat God for more contrition: throw yourself on his mercy, and give up every thing to him; say, 'Lord, I am a poor sinner, hard-hearted, impenitent; I can do nothing of myself: but I beseech thee for forgiveness in the name of thy only begotten and well beloved Son.' If you only believe in him as you ought, you will obtain that peace which passeth all understanding. But if you are not willing to give yourself to God, then I can say no more. If you are not willing to do every thing in your power for Him who offered up his life on the cross for you, you cannot share in the blessings of God's grace. But I cannot think you are reluctant to do it. You must make sacrifices, Mary. The world and its gayeties

are not to be sought. Dancing, which you now like, will not be consistent with the Christian profession which, I hope, you will make some time. Now the question is—are you going to choose the inheritance of the saints, the fellowship of God, the communion of the Holy Spirit, the blessed privileges and glorious hopes of a Christian; or will you choose the *world*, with its fleeting enjoyments, its heartless formalities, and at last a never-ending state of misery? God in mercy grant that you may be enabled to say, 'As for me, I will serve the Lord.' You said nothing of novels in your last letter. Oh! my dear Mary, do give them up. I want to feel confidence in you, to feel that you can fully sympathize with me; and this I cannot do if you are going to array yourself on the side of the world. I would say one thing more about them [novels.] If you love them better than heaven, do you not fear hell? There is nothing more calculated to put serious impressions to flight,

than novel-reading; and I would beseech you, by every solemn consideration, to read no more of them at all. But time is speeding to midnight, and however much I might wish to write longer, I must bid you good-bye. God bless you, my own dear Mary.

MARTHA."

"*Dec.* 20, 1846.—I can scarcely think this year has so nearly gone. Every year flies faster. Moments pass almost unheeded, and soon days, and months, and years will be swallowed up in eternity. This is the Sabbath. Mr. H. preached this morning from the words, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.' If there are any in our congregation who are in this state of mind, Oh! that they may come to an immediate decision, and choose the Lord as their portion. This afternoon, at the Sabbath school, I endeavoured to press the simplest truths of religion home to the children's hearts. But they are very young, and human nature is very depraved. Yet surely my

prayers will be answered. Oh! what joy would it give me to see them Christians: and then, I hope, I could ascribe all the glory to God.

"According to appointment of Presbytery, Drs. Chester and Van Rensselaer visited our church. The sermons of Dr. C. almost drove me to despair; but I have been enabled to trust myself renewedly to the Saviour. Dr. C. asked me if I intended to join the church this communion. . . . I have thought deeply about it. My sincere and earnest prayer is, 'Lord, what wilt *thou* have me to do?' I have given myself to God, and I desire to live *like* a Christian. Sometimes I feel the love of God; at other times I almost doubt the reality of my conversion. Yet I feel I ought to obey the Saviour's dying command. I long to be numbered among his people; to partake of his supper; and though I go forward with trembling—almost distrusting my right to the ordinance, yet afraid to

neglect it—still I trust in the promised grace of Jesus Christ. I must talk with my pastor once more; and O! that I may approach the Lord's table aright. Oh! the sinfulness of my heart! Will it ever be cleansed entirely from its pollution? This year has been very sinful. Yet I feel there has been a manifest progress. Oh! shall I be able to say the same, if I live till the close of the next? Before another year has gone I may be joining the anthems of the redeemed. I may be casting my crown at the feet of Him who has washed us in his own precious, priceless blood, and realizing all the untold blessedness and glory of the heavenly world.

"Oh! glorious hour, Oh! blest abode,
I shall be *near*, and *like* my God;
And flesh and sin no more control
The sacred pleasures of my soul."

To a cousin in Philadelphia, she thus expresses the congratulations of the season:

"A merry Christmas to you, my dear S. E., unsullied by any disappointment or sadness, is a wish that comes from the very bottom of my heart. I feel sure that you will enjoy this universal season of gladness. But has not the past year appeared unusually short to you? I can scarcely realize that it is so nearly gone. Last year I waited so anxiously for the holidays, that it seemed as if Christmas would never come. Now it is here before I have even thought of it. Do you not remember when a year seemed a great while to look forward to? Now it appears a very short time indeed. Thus it is. Our life, from its shortness and vanity, is 'like a tale that is told.' How important, then, that we should prepare for a better and eternal state of existence. . . .

"I find that this letter cannot reach you before Christmas. I will, therefore, extend my good wishes. May you, then, have a happy New Year. May no affliction sadden it. Above all, may you, this year, seek for that

enduring treasure which cannot pass away. May you, this year, seek and find that Saviour who can fill your heart with the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and enable you, in all the changes of this weary life, to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. May you give your whole heart to Him to whom it is entirely due; and relinquish all the vanities of this world for the glorious hopes and privileges of a Christian. And when you are called away from earth, may an entrance be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER VI.

"Tis done, the great transaction's done,
I am my Lord's, and he is mine;
He drew me, and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice divine.
High heaven, that hears my solemn vow,
That vow renewed shall daily hear;
Till in life's latest hour I bow,
And bless in death a bond so dear."

At length the happy hour arrived which had so long been to Martha the goal of her aspirations. She was permitted to say publicly, "I am the Lord's; to call herself by the name of Jacob, and to surname herself by the name of Israel." On the paper containing her consecration of herself to God, is found

the following entry. "January 1, 1847. Again I am about to testify my willingness to live to the Lord. The past year I trust I have felt more love to Christ and enjoyed religion more. I have seen the Saviour full of grace and truth, as the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely: and have been enabled to cast *all* my care upon Him. Next Sabbath I expect for the first time to commemorate his dying love. Oh! that I may find him very precious, and live the coming year much holier than I have ever yet lived. I feel myself unworthy, and not *fit* to commune, yet his grace is all-sufficient and I trust I shall be supported by his Almighty hand. I want to feel my unworthiness more, that I may be very humble. Lord, I am thine: willingly—unreservedly—perpetually—only thine. 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee.'

MARTHA."

Having been admitted by the Session of the Church, on the first Sabbath in January she made a public profession of religion. Her exercises in prospect of this important step were of a deeply solemn and earnest character. Never has her pastor witnessed more unaffected sincerity and more trembling conscientiousness, than she manifested on this occasion. "In the morning of the day on which she joined the Church," says her mother, "before it was light I heard her voice in prayer; and she continued her supplications until I feared she would take cold." It was a day of days to her rejoicing spirit. In her journal she says,—"January 3, 1847.—This day I professed my faith in Christ: publicly gave myself to him: and declared that Him only would I serve. If I know my heart, it is my earnest desire to devote every thing to the Lord. I am willing, dear Saviour, to take up my cross and follow thee. I am very sinful, and know that I can do

nothing of myself; but the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, and on that blood and perfect righteousness I place all my dependence. Ruth H——, Louisa B——, Mr. and Mrs. H——, joined also. Oh! that our names may all be put down in the Lamb's book of life! As I review the past, I cannot but praise God. I have often thought, surely I shall one day perish; but here I am, God's right hand upholding me. He has led me by a way that I knew not, and enabled me to realize his constancy and kindness. May I tremble at the bare thought of bringing reproach on the cause of Christ. I wish to live a life of holy circumspection, that I may adorn my profession. I shall have many things to guard against. I must not care for the applause of men, but my earnest desire and effort must be to be blameless before God. So help me, Lord Jesus, to live only for thy glory."

She refers to the joyful event in a letter to her friend Miss I.

"Salem, N. J., Feb. 1, 1847.

I am behind the time, dearest Mary, as well as yourself. But I have a very good reason for my remissness. Yesterday was the holy Sabbath, and of course I could not write. Do you think we enjoy Sunday as we ought? Do you feel it to be a very delightful day? I trust I can say I do in some degree: but how cold and feeble my feelings are! Nothing at all in comparison of what they ought to be. I read a book some time ago in which the writer spoke of the hymn, 'Welcome, sweet day of rest,' coming over his soul as though the morning stars were singing praises to their Maker. It seemed like a very beautiful idea, and reminded me of an old and devotional hymn, in which speaking of the stars the poet says,

'For ever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine.'

"It greatly rejoiced me to hear that your sister was enabled to trust in Jesus before her death; and I hope she is now singing the praises of her Redeemer. I feel deeply for those 'poor, little, motherless ones.' May they be guided to eternal life by that Saviour who, when on earth, blessed little children. V. also shall have my prayers, dear Mary. If she will only trust in the Saviour, she will find a friend who will 'watch for her good' more than the tenderest mother could do. Tell her that if she chooses Him, she will find perfect peace; but without Him she will be miserable. May I hope that you can say this to her, feeling its truth yourself?

"I hoped you would tell me something of your own feelings. But there was nothing in your letter that could lead me to suppose you were looking to the Lamb of God. Will you think me foolish for bursting into tears when I read it? Oh! if you only knew how earnestly I long for your conversion, you

would not think it strange. Oh! my dearest Mary, do seek the Saviour. Do not look for any thing good in yourself; but believe that Jesus can wash you in his blood from *all* sin. Cast *all* upon him, and the peace of God, which passeth understanding, will fill your heart.

"Perhaps you have heard that I united myself with the church at the last communion. It was after much prayer and self-examination, through much doubt, and opposition, and hesitation that I applied for admission; but it was in accordance with my settled conviction of duty, and I feel *very, very* happy that I have professed my love for the Saviour. I will not attempt to describe the exercises of that solemn but delightful day. I only hope that some time you may experience the same yourself; then you will know, in some degree, my feelings. When I think of all my short-comings and sins, I am ready to tremble, and to exclaim, I shall one day perish. But God's

right hand is still upholding me, and I trust he will still make his grace sufficient for me. Pray for me always, dear Mary; I need your prayers very much. There is one more idea which I wish to give you. Jesus says, 'If two of you shall agree on earth touching any thing, it shall be done of my Father in heaven.' Now, Mary, are you in earnest when you say you are a sinner? Are you seeking salvation with your whole heart? Are you praying for your conversion *earnestly, perseveringly, importunately?* If so, you cannot 'fail of the grace of God.' Is there not some darling sin to which you cling? If you do not answer these questions to me, I wish, I entreat you to answer them to God, and to yourself.

"Artemesia V.'s grandfather is dead. He was in his eightieth year, and has now gone, I trust, to 'enter into the joy of his Lord,' and is tasting the heavenly blessedness. We shall miss him in our prayer meeting. He was a man of prayer. But he is now done

with every earthly ordinance, and is perfectly happy in the presence of the Lord. Mr. Helm preached the most beautiful and comforting funeral sermon I ever heard. His text was—'Willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.' Oh! Mary, let us make our calling and election sure, so that to die will, to us, be gain.

MARTHA."

United to the people of God, not only in spirit, but by a visible relation, the character of Martha now shone forth with equal sweetness and lustre. The reader has already perceived the depth and tenderness of her religious feelings; and will readily suppose that she was earnest and constant in the personal and private duties of a Christian. Prayer was to her much more than a duty. Such was her view of the solemn employment, that it did not seem *prayer* to her unless, in quiet seclusion, she could behold, so to speak, the face of her Redeemer with special nearness, and pour out her whole

heart at the mercy-seat. During the winter, as it was not comfortable to spend much time in her chamber without fire, she usually waited in the evening until the family had retired to rest, and closing the parlour, remained for careful reading of the scriptures and secret prayer. Long after the family was at rest, her cautious step would be heard ascending to her own apartment. "On very cold mornings," says her mother, "I would sometimes step to her chamber to call her, as she requested, but would invariably find her on her knees, with an old cloak thrown over her shoulders. That chamber is now a place hallowed to me by the most tender and sacred associations. From it her spirit took its flight to heaven." As she loved to use an audible voice in prayer, the earnestness of her desires sometimes led her, unconsciously, to elevate her tones so that her mother has overheard the supplications which were meant only for the ear of God. They were marked by that

deep sense of sin and unworthiness apparent in her whole experience; by such expressions of contrition as her parent had heard from no other lips; and by the mingled fervour and confidence of one who felt that she was conversing with God, as it were, face to face. It is not wonderful that if she was at any time deprived of the opportunity of drawing nigh to God in this unreserved and refreshing manner, she felt the privation sorely.

Mention has been already made of the love which Martha felt for the word of God. She was accustomed also to the daily perusal of a few—and only a few other books of devotion. Early in her religious life, she read, with serious attention, the "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul." Afterwards she read again and again, Willison's Sacramental Meditations. For some time previous to her death, a copy of Jay's Morning Exercises was her daily companion; and if the text for the day was particularly rich and practical,

both it and the heads of remark were stored in her memory for meditation in a leisure moment.

She loved the courts of the Lord, and took unusual delight in his word and ordinances. Before uniting with the church, a communion season was not only a solemn but very interesting occasion to her. While at school in Philadelphia, she wrote as follows to a young relative. "At aunt H—'s request I took medicine and went to bed; and though quite sick and unable to read much, I hope I have spent a profitable Sabbath. I suppose you were not at church this afternoon, as it was communion. I always love to go on communion Sabbaths. The services are then so solemn, and I always feel improved. There is an awful separation between those who are members and those who are not, which presents forcibly to my mind the separation that will really take place at the judgment day. I always feel sad that I am not one of

the number who partake of the blessed ordinance." It was very gratifying to her feelings, that while at school in Philadelphia, her visits to her parents were so timed that she was at home every communion season. Her attendance on all the public services was constant and devout. The meetings for prayer and the weekly lecture, no less than the Sabbath services were prized by her. The Lord's day was to her indeed "a delight and honourable." She kept it holy with singular care and fidelity. On that day she would not read a religious paper, because the younger children might not comprehend the distinction between it and another newspaper; and because she wished to devote all the Sabbath hours to the word of God and strictly devotional reading.

Martha presented a beautiful example of *filial* piety. The Divine command, "Honour thy father and thy mother," had its due influence alike upon her feelings and her

conduct. She tenderly loved her parents and reverenced their authority. "She was to me," says her mother, "a most dutiful and affectionate child. I cannot remember that I ever detected her in a falsehood, or even a slight intention to deceive." If reproved for any little oversight or accident, she never manifested the least displeasure. For a moment her countenance would indicate that she keenly felt the censure; but not a syllable of reply, or a gesture which indicated resentment, ever escaped her. The verses addressed to her father and mother were written before she went to Philadelphia, and evidently express the spontaneous feelings of her heart. After her return from school, she continued her lessons in French, drawing, and music. It was also her wish to devote considerable time to reading. In this desire, greatly to the regret of her parents, she was much impeded by domestic cares. But it gave occasion to display more clearly her du-

tiful spirit. She herself admitted, that she possessed no taste for domestic employments, and took no interest in them but from principle and a sense of filial duty. At the same time she felt the interruption which they occasioned to her studies, not a little. Yet, when the health of her mother rendered her attention to them necessary; she cheerfully sacrificed her own inclination, and with exemplary patience endeavoured to promote the comfort of the family. In regard to her own wants, she manifested the utmost delicacy and moderation. When she desired a piano forte, she was careful not to evince any importunity, lest her father might purchase it before it was entirely convenient. After the instrument was procured, she devoted herself to the lessons and practice almost as *religiously* as if they had been enjoined by moral precept, because her father was fond of music. The hope of imparting one charm to the family circle, of beguiling a weary moment in her

father's professional life, or of attracting her brothers to herself and home, was a motive stronger than her personal accomplishment, and invested the attainment with a higher value than it possessed as a means of her own gratification.

She was a tender and devoted sister. Connecting her views of religion with her sisterly affection, the interest which she took in her brothers and younger sister was almost maternal. She felt a great desire for their progress in knowledge. But above all she longed for their conversion and everlasting welfare. "She was in the habit," says her mother, "of taking Sally and Maskell (the youngest two) apart with her for prayer. Often when she thought them asleep, they have heard her voice in supplication." Shortly before her own illness, an interesting pupil of the Academy died; and she expressed the most anxious desire that it might make a good impression on the mind of her brother who was

about the same age. Afterward, when that brother was taken sick with scarlet fever, and it became probable the disease would go through the family; she told one of her pious companions that she had earnestly prayed, if it should be the will of God to remove any of the family, it might be herself. She hoped that she was prepared to die, but she had no such hope respecting her brothers and sister.

As a member of the church, she was exemplary, devoted, and useful. Her standard of Christian practice, like her standard of inward holiness, was very high; and she endeavoured to approximate more closely to the spirit and example of the Saviour, day by day. She loved the church of her Redeemer; and from the time she could regard herself as a disciple of Christ, it was evidently her highest aim to live for him and Zion. Her heart overflowed with love to the people of God. On the thanksgiving day previous to her joining the church, most of the congregation as-

sembled at the house of the pastor for friendly intercourse with him and each other. That house was, at any time, a favourite resort with Martha. It was a rare thing that a whole day passed without her being in it once —often more than once. But she was wholly in her element on the thanksgiving occasion. The import of the day, the expression of regard to her pastor, and the social greetings of Christians—all harmonized exactly with her feelings. It was a happy day to her. She took her youngest brother with her, and as he has since stated, retired with him before they went, to pray that they might be blessed. Since her death a member of the church in humble life, related to the writer the following incident connected with that day. "I had no acquaintance with Martha, though I knew her well enough by sight; nor did I know that she was serious. But when I entered the house, I was directed to a room in which I found a number of girls. Martha immedi-

ately met me with a very kind and sweet expression, which was not only unexpected, but produced an effect on my feelings that I could not account for. But when I saw her stand up for admission to the church, the recollection of her manner that day flashed upon my mind at once. I then knew it was her Christian affection that gave her the peculiar expression which so touched my feelings." So it was, no doubt. That almost electrifying benignity of expression was no other than the utterance of her love to a disciple of Christ, awakening its response in the mysterious sympathies of the Christian bosom.

"Martha felt a peculiar tenderness for inquirers. It awakened all her heart to know that a person was anxious for salvation. This tender solicitude was beautifully displayed in behalf of one of her young companions just after she herself had joined the church. "My intimate acquaintance with Martha," says this young lady, "did not commence until I

had become interested in the great subject which filled her heart. When I knew the love of God to be the great theme in which she took most delight, and perceived her intense desire for the conversion of others, I found it a very easy matter to unburden my heart to her. I well remember her manner when I first alluded to my feelings. She clasped me warmly to her breast, and said, 'O! I wish you would be persuaded to give yourself at once to God.' I found her from that moment, a kind, sympathizing and *judicious* friend. She never lost an opportunity to assist me. Often when every thing appeared dark, her timely aid almost saved me from despair. She was full of encouragement for me, although I afterwards found her familiar with the dark side, very suspicious of herself, and constantly humbled with the view of her sinfulness and low attainments in piety. Yet she skilfully pointed me to all that was consoling; placed before me every promise which could

bring a ray of comfort; and when I found peace in believing, her gratitude and joy were boundless.

"The anxiety manifested for all her unconverted friends was remarkable. She watched with the deepest interest every appearance of seriousness, and never lost an opportunity of increasing and encouraging it. 'A word fitly spoken, how good is it!' Her feelings were very ardent, and having been directed in the right channel, ran out in love to her Saviour and all his people. She loved God's people, because they loved her Saviour and were the objects of his affection. Her attachment to her pastor I have rarely seen equalled, and never exceeded. I have often heard her remark, that she hoped she could love any one who should be placed over her as a guide in spiritual things; yet she felt confident the *precise kind* of regard she felt for her present pastor could never again be felt. I well know the feeling and the cause.

"In private conversation she invariably chose religious subjects; and expressed frequent regret that Christians should appear so unwilling to converse on those subjects which, to her, seemed sweetest. She often remarked upon the glory of that better land where undisturbed communion with Jesus will be enjoyed. After reading one of Russell's letters which relates to the request of Zebedee's children to be near Christ in his kingdom, she said she could not feel satisfied with a low place in heaven. Although she thought the lowest seat an unspeakable privilege, and more than she deserved; yet she wished to be very near to God and to enjoy close fellowship with the Saviour. Here she constantly mourned over her imperfections, and felt that her very best services were full of sin. She longed to be more like Christ and to enjoy more intimate communion with him. Now she has 'risen and gone' to a brighter and better world; and we doubt not that she is

enjoying a very exalted station in the kingdom of Christ. To her the Master has said, 'Because thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' May we *all* be found watching, and *our* lamps trimmed and burning; that when the cry is heard, 'Behold the Bridegroom cometh,' we may enter in to the marriage supper of the Lamb. S. G. C."

The following notes were written to this friend during the spiritual conflict above referred to. They were pencilled on any scrap of paper that was at hand, as she could snatch a moment from other duties.

"My dear Sally,

I wanted to write you a little note, to tell you how very, very glad I was that you felt so much on the subject of religion, and that we could sympathize so entirely with each other. I do wish you could trust yourself to

the Saviour, and give your whole heart away to him. Jesus Christ came to save the lost. Will you not believe that he is willing to save you? Only confide in him, and you will be happy. I could not say this to you, for my emotions would not let me. But I felt I could write it; and though I do not suppose I could add any weight to the advice of your kind brother, yet I wished to say something. I cannot bring any more arguments than he has; but I know that Christ is anxious to have you come to him, and he will make you feel those sins you mourn much more than you now do. 'Oh! taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed are all they that put their trust in him.' I hope you are already a Christian. If not, may the Lord guide you into all truth, and enable you to be one of the few who find the way of life. This is my sincere wish and prayer.

Affectionately,

MARTHA."

"I know I cannot say any thing to you that would have more influence, if as much, as Mr. Helm or your brother. But then I am so anxious for you to feel that Jesus will pardon all your sins. Perhaps, while you are endeavouring to trust in your Saviour, though every thing is dark, the light will come at last, and you will be enabled to rejoice in the hope that all your sins are forgiven. Lose sight, dear Sally, if you can, of the imperfections of your views and feelings, and fix a believing, trusting eye on the cross of the Saviour.—His precious, priceless blood can cleanse you from all sin. Won't you try to-night to surrender all into his hands and leave the result with him? I know I cannot advise you as I ought, but I can pray for you; and if I could help you to come to the Saviour, it would make me very, very happy. Confide to me all your doubts and fears, and rest assured of meeting the warmest, heartfelt sympathy. I know no one can feel for you more than I do.

I can imagine all your perplexities; but if you can only forget every thing but the Saviour's forgiving love, you will be comforted, I know. Do commit your whole soul into the Saviour's hands.

Affectionately,

MARTHA."

"I can scarcely tell you, dear Sally, how glad I was to find you felt more comfortably. I have no doubt you will find peace, if you continue seeking the love and favour of Jesus Christ. You say, if you only knew that you really loved the Saviour, you would be so happy. Well, now, if you will reflect one moment, I think you will find you do. Do you not love his people?—because they are his? Do you not love his worship? Are you not longing to be holy? Do you think, dear Sally, that a heart which felt *no* love to the Saviour would mourn over its sins and constantly seek deliverance from them? Do you think you could find pleasure in holy em-

ployments, if you did not love Him to whom they lead? Would it not make you perfectly miserable to be debarred from serving him as long as you live? Think of these things calmly and seriously, and if your heart does not respond to them as you wish, I am very much mistaken in you. Plead the promise, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.' Trust yourself in the Lord's hands, and leave the result to him. Dedicate yourself solemnly to his service, resolved daily to seek his sustaining grace. Cannot you leave all in his hands and go forward in duty, though it may be in the dark? 'Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God, and (mark the promise,) the *peace of God*, which passeth all understanding, *shall fill* your heart.' I commend you to a covenant God: may He guide you.

Affectionately,

MARTHA."

"It grieves me, dear Sally, to find you still groping in the dark. I had hoped that you would find peace in believing. You do not *know* that you love God's people because they are his? I thought, after I wrote that question, that it might confuse you. I appreciate your fearfulness of ascribing your attachment to them to the proper motive, lest you might be deceived. But take a simple case. If you already love a particular person, is not your love sensibly increased, should you learn that such a person loves the Saviour? But I cannot make you see that you have the right feeling. I hope you will look a little deeper into your heart, and I am almost sure you will find something encouraging. However, I am not certain. If we should search for good in ourselves for ever, we should not find it. Sure I am that if I should try to find something in my actions this day to give me a right to go to God, I would sit down in despair. If I were to seek for that deep and

pungent conviction of sin, that intense love to the Saviour, which I ought to feel, I could not satisfy myself. Dear Sally, it is only by fixing an eye on the cross that we can be happy. I know I do not love the Saviour at all as I ought. But he does not say, if you do not feel just so much affection for me, you cannot be saved. All that is required is to feel your need of a Saviour, and to trust him. We go to Christ because we are unfeeling and hard-hearted. He will make us feel our sins more. I am sure I never cried 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' with so much earnestness as I have since I hoped I was forgiven. My sins never grieved me half so much; and I am almost sure you will feel the same in your experience. I need your prayers, for I am weak; but the grace of God is sufficient. Read the Bible and pray, and I do hope you will be happy. God bless you.

MARTHA."

"I received your note, dear Sally, yesterday afternoon, and I assure you it gave me the sincerest pleasure. I am truly glad you can go to the Saviour just as you are—just as sinful, hard-hearted, and unbelieving as you feel yourself to be. Endeavour to trust his *love*. He will save you, if you will only rely on his promise. I trust you are *not* deceived; I pray that you may be led in the right way. How glad your brother will be, when he finds that you have given yourself to Christ. Did you not feel very happy Thursday evening? There is something so delightful in trusting our whole soul into the Saviour's hands, and in feeling he will 'save to the uttermost' all who trust in him. We can rejoice now in one Saviour, can we not? Do you not feel in your inmost heart that Jesus is your Saviour? Do you not love him very much? Let us both thank God for bringing us to a knowledge of himself. Do not forget that praise is the Christian's employment. Endeavour to rejoice in

the Lord. Each day commit your soul to him, and I know you will be happy. Henry was here last evening, and we spoke of those serious in the church. He said you seemed to be in a great deal of trouble lately. *I* could have told him 'good news,' but did not. Do you go to Philadelphia on Monday? If so, be watchful and careful. I suppose you are thinking of the words, Luke xxii. 19, last clause. Seek direction from above in this important matter. Ever your sincere friend,

MARTHA."

"If I could make you feel happier, dear Sally, I should feel glad. But I am too inexperienced to advise. You ask about my feelings. Ah! if you knew the coldness of this heart; if you knew the sins I have committed since I professed to be a Christian, you would not think of asking me to help you. But I trust only in the Saviour's blood: it is my sole dependence. I can truly say, that

without it I would be most miserable. I have felt *all* you complain of. Sometimes I thought I would trust Jesus for every thing. Again I was afraid I had no right even to pray to him. Those are sad times, dear Sally, when the heart is nigh breaking, and yet cannot see the way of pardon. Can you not give yourself to Christ? My heart sympathizes with you entirely. Sometimes the Lord hides his face, and I feel ready to despair. I say, I shall one day surely perish. But his sovereign, amazing grace is still as efficacious as ever. Do trust that grace. Are you perfectly willing to forsake the world for God? Is there not some secret feeling of reluctance? I judge by myself. I often wonder now that I ever came to Christ. Yet I think I have come to him. It was by a way I knew not. His Spirit can do all things: trust him, if you possibly can. I really think it would have been better to have come directly home last night from prayer-meeting. I was too trifling. Am I not sometimes a stumbling-block to you?

When shall I be holy? Sometimes I think I ought not to consider myself a Christian. But I still endeavour to trust the Saviour. I wish you could do so. I am afraid to tell you any thing, for fear it might be wrong. But the state of mind which distrusts every thing but God is not wrong, I think. 'The heart,' you know, 'is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.' Do not rely on it for a moment, but believe all your Saviour says. His word can never fail; what he says is true: trusting in him, you cannot err. You are now young: do devote the best part of your days to God.

The sermon was excellent, I thought, this morning; but I felt too sick to enjoy it very much. Father and mother are not willing for me to go to Sunday school in the rain. Tell Mr. B. I am sick, and ask him to get a teacher for my class. I am sorry I cannot come: it is my first absence.

Yours affectionately,

MARTHA."

"I am gratified, dear Sally, that you have resolved to profess your love to the Saviour. I hope you will be very happy in the solemn act. I have no doubt that you feel it to be very solemn indeed; and that you are very solicitous to profess your Redeemer in a fit manner. I rejoice that you have resolved to be a Christian; and I know you are convinced that religion affords the only true happiness. I do not feel capable of giving you advice. But I know if you trust the Lord *completely*, believe all his promises, and look to him continually for strength; if you distrust your own heart and feel that you are an unprofitable servant, not at all worthy of salvation, and yet believe that for the sake of Jesus the Lord will forgive and save; you cannot fail to find peace. The Lord will be your guide even unto death; he will sanctify your troubles, dearest Sally; his gracious presence will support you in afflictions; he will manifest himself to you as a reconciled Father through

all the changes of this life; and when you are called to pass through the dark valley of the shadow of death, he will be with you and guide you to heaven, where the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne will lead you to living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes. Has he not well said, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee?' Answer this soon, and tell me all your fears and hopes. You know I sympathize with you in every one of them.

Yours affectionately,

MARTHA."

'MY DEAR SALLY,

I have been up in my room reading, and praying, and trying to draw near to God; and I feel Christ to be very precious. Whenever I am engaged in these delightful employments, my heart involuntarily turns to you, and I think of our intercourse of late. What pleasant times we have had together,

talking about our own hearts and the Saviour, and trying to be his entirely. Do not you love to think of those moments, such as we had at Mr. Helm's, in Caddy's room? I have been reading your notes over again, and thinking of your long and sad conflict, and how pleasant it was for me to help you ever so little. I feel grateful that you have really set out in the Christian life: we can now sympathize with each other entirely. I never realized how much feeling and tenderness was expressed in the hymn, 'Blest be the tie that binds,' until I knew you. I think our hearts are really united in Christian love; for it was that which led to our friendship. I know that I am deeply interested for your spiritual welfare; and I cannot believe you are regardless of mine. But, dear Sally, let us try to be *more* holy. I am mourning daily over my sinfulness, and yet I do not see the improvement. Shall we not have a particular hour to pray for each other? Let us

take the promise, 'If any two of you shall agree respecting one thing, it shall be done of my Father.' I have not the exact words, but sufficiently near the meaning. Suppose at seven o'clock in the evening we pray for each other. If convenient, let us retire for the purpose; but if not, you know our hearts can be lifted up to God. We can include Sally Ann* in our petitions, or any one for whom we both feel interested. May not this plan be beneficial? I think it is very delightful to feel certain at a particular moment that a friend is praying for us. It may relieve us when in darkness, or under the hidings of God's face. WILL and I were talking of that the evening he was here, and he said he thought scarcely any one suffered more from occasional depression than he. It is sad to see every thing dark before us, as I sometimes do. 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness.' But

* A young lady at the time anxious for salvation, since admitted to the church.

Jesus is a tried and precious friend. Let us trust him entirely.

With very much love,

MARTHA."

Her desire for the salvation of others was habitual. There scarcely remains a letter, a note, or even a composition which she ever penned, that does not reveal the state of her feelings on this great subject. In a note to a relative, before she had joined the church, she says, "I fear you may think it out of place in one so young and erring to advise you. But, although I have but little experience, I tremblingly hope I am not entirely destitute of the knowledge of Him, whom to know aright is life eternal. That you may know him and surrender yourself unreservedly to him is the earnest and unceasing prayer of

MARTHA."

In a playful letter to the same cousin, written with more *abandon* than she ever indulged

in another instance, she says: "How I came to speak in so trifling a manner, I cannot imagine. And now, I want to address you on a subject which I fear will be unpleasant. I only *fear* it will: I *hope* it wo'n't. We have always been so intimate that there is no use of avoiding the subject of our religious feelings, while we speak about every thing else. You know how I regard this subject. Do you accord with me? Do you regard religion as the one thing needful? Oh! my dear S. E., I cannot express to you how earnestly I desire that you may sympathize with me in this."

TO MY MOTHER.

My mother, words cannot express
The measure of my love:
Affection of no earthly mould,
But that of heaven above.

Oh! could I tell thee how my heart
Is firmly bound to thine!
Thy feelings of my own are part,
Thy sorrows all are mine.

Can I repay thee as I ought,
For thy unceasing care?
I cannot; but my Saviour will,
In answer to my prayer.

When he shall make his jewels up,
Among them thou wilt stand,
And strike thy harp to heavenly strains,
With the angelic band.

And wilt thou, in thy fervent prayers,
Thy covenant God beseech,
His gracious Spirit to impart,
Thy erring child to teach?

CHAPTER VII.

"Calm on the bosom of thy God,
Young spirit! rest thee now!
Ev'n while on earth thy footsteps trod,
His seal was on thy brow.
Dust to its narrow house beneath!
Soul to its place on high!
They that have seen thy peaceful death,
No more need fear to die."

Martha now filled a large place both in the affections and the hopes of her Christian friends. They justly regarded her as one of the brightest ornaments and most valuable members of the church. Possessing a superior and well cultivated mind, an affectionate disposition, and great sweetness of manners;

she was fitted to shine in any circle, and to win the love of all who knew her. But religion was her chief adornment. To deep earnestness in her personal feelings, she joined a most attractive Christian character, and exemplary zeal and energy in the cause of her Redeemer. Ardent, but judicious; humble, yet firm and decided; with every qualification for usefulness; she seemed to have just entered a luminous path, stretching onward and upward through many years. With her gifts and her devotedness, it was reasonable to hope that she would be a blessing to her friends and Zion. But already had she reached the culminating point in her upward path; and one brief, sad chapter must record all that remains of her earthly history.

In the latter part of April she made a short visit to her friends in Philadelphia, hastening home for the meeting of the Presbytery in the church at Salem, which she anticipated with great interest. Either in the city or on

the boat homeward, it is supposed her brother, who accompanied her, contracted the scarlet fever. Though very sick with the disease, it seemed, in his case, to be under the control of remedies; and it was hoped that if it spread through the family, the other children would have it in a mild form. Although Martha evinced nothing like the panic which many feel, her mind was deeply impressed with the solemnity of such a visitation to a large family. The reader will remember her disinterested prayer that she might be taken rather than one of the family who was not pious. In her journal she says, "The disease will probably go through the family. O Lord, our times are in thy gracious hand. I want to be prepared for life or death. If God shall see fit to remove any of us by death, I do hope I can say, 'Thy will be done.' I feel that I can trust my heavenly Father.

'I'll go and come, nor fear to die,
Till from on high, thou call'st me home.'

I hope I am going home." This was the last entry in her journal, and filled the book in which it is written: the last words being on a slip of paper pinned to the cover.

On Thursday, May 6th, she, for the last time, spent a season alone in her room. It cannot be doubtful how those moments were employed. Then she took the solemn view of death appropriate under the circumstances, and set her house in order against the summons, which she felt might be so near. The following lines, pencilled on a card, are believed to have been written at that time:

"I have risen and gone," to that happy land,
Where the saints and the martyrs dwell;
And when I have joined the glorious band,
Then, then I can say—"All is well."

When I cast my crown at my Saviour's feet,
With emotions that none here can tell;
And join the glad anthem for angels meet,
Then, then I can say—"All is well."

"I have risen and gone" to the land above,
Where with rapture the heart doth swell;
And when I rejoice in my Saviour's love,
Then, then I can say—"All is well."

"I have risen and gone" from this gloomy earth,
Where with coldness we often repel,
To a far distant country, of holier worth,
Where every one says—"All is well."

About sun-set she entered for the last time her pastor's house, two doors from her father's, where her winning smile was so familiar and so welcome. Mrs. H. made some remark in reference to her sad expression. She replied that she was not well, but felt as if something dreadful was going to happen. When her friend attempted to cheer her, she burst into tears, placed her handkerchief to her eyes, and ran home. In the night she was taken ill of the fever, but the disease did not assume a threatening form until near its termination. On Monday evening she was thought to have passed the crisis and ap-

peared decidedly better. But near eleven o'clock she grew worse, and the symptoms became very alarming. During the night she suffered intense agony in her throat and head. Early on Tuesday morning a message was sent to her pastor. He came as soon as possible, and was shown into her room. At the same time he was told she would probably not know him. He found her in an almost unconscious state; but when addressed she revived and easily recognised him. She also gave intelligent and very satisfactory answers to all his inquiries; and retained the entire possession of her reason until almost the very moment of dissolution. Her mind was perfectly calm, her trust in the Saviour, simple and cordial; and while for her friends' sake she would be glad to live, yet if it were God's will to take her away, she was ready to die. These answers were given without the least agitation or alarm; and in the same devout, humble, and serious manner which had al-

ways marked the expression of her religious hopes. In a very touching manner she expressed her obligations to her pastor for the interest he had taken in her, and thanked him for all his efforts to promote her spiritual welfare.

This was an awful day in the family. One child was barely out of danger, another was just sickening, and of three more, it was doubtful which would die first. Martha grew worse throughout the day. In the afternoon, she inquired if her father thought her dying. This question was afterwards repeated, and her mother asked—"Martha, are you afraid to die?" She answered, "No:" but said if her dissolution was near, she did not wish to go to sleep. Soon after she thought her bodily senses were failing. Already she articulated with difficulty, and she believed that her sight and hearing grew weaker. It was evident she wished to say something to her friends before the power of

speech was gone. Again she asked what her father thought; and her mother, feeling that she ought not to be kept in suspense, told her the whole truth. The intelligence gave her not the slightest alarm. She had only been waiting for this admission, that she might be allowed to express her last desires. After asking her mother to lie down by her side, she placed her head close to the breast of her parent and put her arm tenderly around her person. In this position she spoke freely of her departure, and gave utterance to her dying requests. To her mother she expressed the most fond and tender affection, saying that if she had ever failed in her duty as a child, she desired her forgiveness. When her parent spoke in strong terms of her dutiful spirit and exemplary conduct, she said with earnestness, "I have tried to do right, but I am not perfect; I feel my sinfulness." "But," replied her parent, "you have always mourned for your sins." "Yes," she answered,

"whenever I knew it to be sin: but that is not my dependence *now*. My whole trust is in Christ." She then told her mother where to find her papers, which she directed to be destroyed. The mention of these reminded her of an unanswered letter from her friend and early schoolmate. She spoke of it. "Write," said she to her mother, "write to Mary I. and give her my love. Tell her that I received her letter the day I was taken sick, and could not answer it. Beg her not to read those foolish novels, but to seek the Saviour. I want her to meet me in heaven." As the state of her throat rendered her articulation difficult and indistinct, she would eagerly inquire, "Do you understand me?" "Tell cousin S. E.," she proceeded, "not to delay repentance till a dying bed. If I had now to *seek* the Saviour, I could not do it. All I can do now is to lie in his hands, and I feel him to be very precious. Tell my aunts that I love them." She exhorted her mother, in the

most solemn manner, to do all in her power to lead the other children to the Saviour, that she might meet them an unbroken family in heaven. A member of the church present asked if she knew her. "O! yes," she replied, "it is Mrs. B. Give my love to E., [her daughter,] and tell her to seek religion." She directed the same message to the Sunday school teachers who were not pious. She wished to find them all at last in heaven, where she expected to meet her pastor and Christian friends. Her father being engaged with one of the other children which was very low, she asked for him, and took leave of him with the request that he would meet her in heaven. To the prayer which her pastor offered, she gave a devout and fixed attention; and though in great pain joined in singing hymns which she mentioned—"Jesus, lover of my soul."—"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound!" When her mother began to repeat, "Rock of ages, shelter me," she re-

cited in a feeling and emphatic manner, the whole of the first stanza. Almost in her last hour she attempted to join in singing, "There is a fountain filled with blood." Her last audible expression was, "Happy—happy—happy."

But the scene cannot be adequately described. It is easy to throw around a dying bed the curtains of fiction so completely as to conceal the reality. The writer wishes to give a faithful impression of this one. He describes only what he saw and heard. *Death* was there; and death is a solemn thing. He felt it to be inexpressibly solemn in this case; yet he never felt any place to be so near heaven. There was a dear sufferer in the agony of the last conflict; and the pains, the groans, the dying strife of that conflict, are serious realities. But there was a divine presence that was also a reality; and the peace, the hope, the strength, afforded to the sufferer, were as real as the very pangs of dissolution.

It was the Saviour's presence in "the valley of the shadow of death," that took away the sting of death. It was his hand upholding his confiding child, that made it easy to die. At about half-past twelve in the morning of May 12th, Martha was at rest.

Her death cast a gloom over the whole community. The church to which she belonged was in tears; and though without a relative in the village outside of her father's house, there were never more tears shed upon one grave in the place than fell on hers. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." An extract from the discourse preached by her pastor will close this chapter.

"My brethren, God is 'wonderful in counsel,' as well as 'mighty in working.' My anxious heart has asked—what meaneth this? Why is one so full of promise—so likely to live, and so fitted to live usefully, gone so quickly? But I can only hear the sovereign whisper of the Saviour—'What I do thou

knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.' He commits no blunder in these strange allotments. We cannot understand why it is best; but he does all things well. He can make plain his conduct hereafter. He can give the reasons to the weeping parents whom he has stricken, to the church which he has bereaved, and to the Christian friends that mourn.

"I pray that the event may make just the right impression upon every heart. I trust I have received valuable impressions upon my own mind. Never has the gospel appeared to me more glorious than in connexion with this event. Never have I entertained higher views of my office, than when I have thought of the privilege of guiding a mind like hers to the Saviour, of contributing to the development of a character like hers, and of helping onward to the kingdom so bright a subject of God's redeeming grace.

"'Brethren, the time is short.' The sum-

mons will come for you each in turn; it will come for some of you soon. If I shall be called to stand by your dying bed, may it be like hers. Let the sweet remembrance of her devotion to the Saviour stimulate us in the path of duty. Let our hearts, like hers, literally breathe after holiness—more devotedness—more of the Saviour's image—more of refreshing communion with God—and more freedom from sin. We shall soon *all* be in eternity. Dear brethren, shall we *all* meet the loved and gone in a sweet re-union before the throne of our Redeemer?

"But, my young friends, my chief solicitude is, that this event may make a right impression upon your minds. It seems to me that God was never so near to you, and his voice so solemn as it now is. He came into your midst in a season of prevailing coldness, and took one of you as a subject of his grace, to show you that the young may find the Saviour. He secretly led her on to most surprising at-

tainments in piety, to show you how religion can bless the young. He enabled her to put on a most attractive Christian character, and to exhibit a singular example of zeal and energy, to show you what a mere child can do, when wholly devoted to the Saviour, to glorify his name. He has now taken her away to show you how his grace can brighten the dying couch of a young Christian. I feel as though the Saviour made now his most affecting appeal to you; as though standing among you and spreading his arms he invited you to seek him as she did. From her dying lips he sends a message entreating you to consecrate yourselves to his service. Almost from the gates of the celestial city, her warm and loving request comes to all of you collectively, and to many of you by name—'meet me in heaven.' It seems to me, that if you are 'ordained to life' at all, this will be the time when you will choose Christ; and that if now you will not embrace religion, your salvation is scarce-

ly to be expected. Who of her young friends will now take Martha's place in the church, and do for Jesus what it was in her heart to do? Who of you will meet her where she now is in glory?"

APPENDIX.

The following letters are from two young gentlemen, members of the church in Salem, and candidates for the ministry. They will show the estimation in which her Christian friends held Martha, and the sorrow occasioned by her death.

"Nassau Hall, May 30, 1847.

"DEAR SISTER SALLY,

I received with pleasure your letter, though it renewed the saddening recollection of *her*, whom we all so much loved. Never was the uncertainty of life so forcibly impressed upon my mind. One week before, I had engaged rooms for her at the approaching Commencement; and now I cannot pass the house but with a heavy heart. How sudden,

too, was the stroke for you, and how aching must be the void left in the church! You feel her loss more than I can. It seems to me more like a troubled dream, than a sad reality. Sally, I cannot tell you how I felt when the news came. One of the students told me that brother was looking for me. Instantly, I thought he had a letter from home, and bounded to his room in all the glee of joyous anticipation. As I entered the room I saw his sad countenance, and my hand trembled as I took the letter. I tried to suppress the burning tear which stole down my cheek, but could not. I thought of the church, of Mr. Helm, of you, dear sister. I thought of her family; and I knew there were anguished hearts at home. One so young, so lovely, so near to many hearts, and so much endeared to all, could not be snatched away without wringing bitter grief from many hearts.

"I thank you for the account of her last hours. Were they not worth a whole life of

self-denial? If there is any thing which can sooth a mourner's anguish, it must be such a death-bed; where the glories of our future home are foreshadowed in the smile that lights the pallid brow, and an echo of the song of redemption is heard in those sweet words, "happy — happy — happy." I rejoice that you stood by her side, for such a scene cannot fail to draw you closer to the cross. Would that some of our College infidels had been there, to have seen a Christian die, to have felt the power of the gospel in sustaining the soul in the last conflict. . . . . .

W. C. C."

"Princeton, N. J., Friday, May 13, 1847.

"My dear Sister H.,

"I have just received your letter which contains the sad news of Martha's death; and am very much obliged to you for giving me so full and good an account of her last hours. I feel a strange sadness in regard to her sud-

den and early death. There was so much both in her personal character and in her position in relation to the church, to make her interesting to my mind, that her loss affects me with unusual sorrow. The marked character of her conversion and the circumstances under which she was admitted to the church, her youth, and energy, and powers of mind, all seemed to be a pledge of future usefulness as a Christian woman. Her death is certainly a great loss to the church. If the direction of the destroyer's arrow had been in our hands, her life would have been spared. But God has seen good to order it otherwise. He knew her virtues much better than we did. He knew the necessities of our poor church better than we can know them; and the interests of that church are far dearer to his heart than they are to ours. Yet he has called away from it, in the beginning of her usefulness, and at the dawn of her day of life, the very one to whom we should have looked for

help. It is indeed an inscrutable providence to us. We gaze upon it, and our hearts are bewildered in the attempt to discover its meaning. The cloud which envelops the ways of God grows thicker and darker as it rests upon the interests which are nearest and dearest our souls. So it ever will; and we shall never see the brightness which gilds its other side, so long as we look without faith at the isolated events which wound our feelings. But when we turn our eyes with submissive confidence to "our Father," when we think of his love to his people, his purposes of mercy to his church; the things which before confused and bewildered us are lost in the vast scheme of love and mercy which includes them all. Such views of the ways of God must reconcile us to the afflictions of life.

"You speak of the friendship existing between Martha and Sally, of the nature of their intimacy, and of the good effect it seemed to have upon Sally's mind. For this, too, I

could have desired her to be spared. As I love my sister, I love those who would do her soul good. I feel glad that they were brought together. I am glad Sally was with her in the hour of trial. If we must part with those we love, it is a sweet solace to linger around their dying bed and watch the last struggle of the departing spirit. She has that comfort; and I hope it will be to her more than comfort; that it will strengthen her young faith, impress her mind with the awfulness of death, and the necessity of living as a Christian should live—in constant preparation for its unexpected approach. While I am writing, the same disease that hurried away our friend, may have begun its work with her. Though she did perfectly right to venture within the reach of the dreadful contagion, when called upon by the double claim of Christian sympathy and affection, she may not be preserved from its influence. I hope she may. But I also hope that she, and you,

and I, and all of us may be prepared for the hour, which must come sooner or later to us all. I wish I could be with you on Sabbath, to hear Mr. Helm's discourse. Martha's death must have affected him deeply. She was the fruit of his ministry, and one of the hopes of his church. She was strongly attached to him as her pastor and friend, and no doubt his heart yearned over her with special tenderness. I am glad he had such satisfactory conversations with her on her dying bed. While it sorely afflicts a kind pastor's heart to see such a one taken away—so young, so bright, so full of promise—it must also gladden his spirit to see her meeting death in a triumphant manner. Besides, it leaves the testimony of a dying Christian to the community; and I am glad for their sakes and for the church, that she was able to talk with him. What will be the effect of this dispensation on the church? You hope it may be sanctified. So do I from my very heart. I love that church.

My father and my sisters worship there; and in a little circle that gathers around her communion board, are some of my dearest friends. To Mr. H. I feel deeply indebted for his kindness to me and our family; and I have rejoiced, as I know he has, over the evidence of returning life, which the last few months have exhibited. A solemn stroke has now fallen upon her. Will she receive the chastisement as a child, and humble herself before God? If so, God will make this the precursor of rich blessings. I hope it may be so indeed. We have great interests at stake, depending on the revival of religion—the strengthening of our own faith and hope—a preparation for a brighter crown in heaven; perhaps, too, our meeting there a brother now fast approaching the snares of a young man's life, without the promise or hope of God's blessing. Shall we be able to say, in that better world, 'we are all here?' T. W. C."

TO MARTHA IN HEAVEN.

Friend of my early years,
Oh! loved and lost one! whither hast thou fled?
I seek thee through a mist of blinding tears,
I seek thee, though they tell me thou art dead.

It cannot, cannot be.
So loved, so lovely in thy early bloom;
Brightest and dearest! death was not for thee,
Thou art not shrouded in the noisome tomb.

Alas! alas, thou art!
I hear it in a thousand stifled sighs,
I read it in the grief of many eyes,
In the strange aching void of my own heart.

I miss thee every where.
Thou ne'er hast wandered in this quiet wood,
Thou ne'er wast with me by this silvery flood,
And yet I miss thy presence even here.

I miss thee every where;
Thou ne'er hast watched beside my couch of rest,

I never slumbered on thy gentle breast,
Yet wake and weep to find thou art not there.

Dearest and loveliest one,
Thou whom I loved with all a sister's love,
Hast thou forgotten in thy home above
That I am here in this bleak world alone?

Oh! thou did'st love me well.
Fondly thy heart was knit to mine in life,
My name hung on thy lips in parting strife:
Dost thou remember, dost thou love me still?

Come back, come back to me.
Oh! let me hear that gentle voice again,
Speak to me sometimes in that thrilling strain.
I would not fear the dead, or shrink from *thee*.

Oh! sister of my soul!
I know that thou art smiling with the blest,
That thou art pillowed on thy Saviour's breast,
And that between us billows darkly roll.

Thou can'st not come to me;
There are no tears in heaven, and thou would'st weep,
Could'st thou but bend above my troubled sleep,
And mark how bitterly I call on thee.

There are no tears in heaven;
Thou never more wilt know of grief or care.
And do I murmur, love, that thou art there?
Dwelling in perfect bliss, redeemed—forgiven.

Thou can'st not come to me:
Thy gentle voice will thrill no more my heart,
Till meeting—meeting never more to part:
God grant, my sister, I may come to thee.

MARY I——.

Logan Water, June, 1847.

TO THE MOTHER OF MY FRIEND.

Oh merciless and pitiless,
  Is the cruel reaper death;
He fells the stately forest
  And blights the blushing wreath.
He smites the lowly cottage
  He smites the lordly hall
And chooses him the loveliest
  The dearest of them all.

So gentle and so tender,
In her beauty's early bloom,
Too loving and too lovely
For the dark and noisome tomb.
There were many hearts to mourn her,
There was wailing deep and wild,
God have pity on the mother
Who weeps for such a child.

Oh lorn and lonely mother,
Whom none can bring relief,
May He who sent thee sorrow
Shed a blessing on thy grief.
For thy heart is very desolate:
And in thy lonely home
Wildly weeping, sad and dreary,
Thou dost sit to mourn alone.

Thou art listening for the footsteps
Thou never more may'st hear,
Thou art listening for the silvery tone,
But it breaks not on thy ear:
And the hand whose gentle touch was laid
At eve upon thy brow,
And the lip that fondly clung to thine,
Mother, where are they now.

Dark and silent—dark and silent—
Heart and home are wrapped in gloom,
While thy idol and thy treasure
Sleepeth dreamless in the tomb.
Poor broken-hearted mother,
Well may thy grief be wild.
God have pity on her sorrow
Who weeps for such a child.

Cease thy weeping, mourning mother!
Cease thy wailing, sad and wild;
Look up! Oh! blessed mother,
See! where smiles thy angel child.
With no cloud upon her features,
With no sorrow on her brow;
From the azure depths of heaven,
She is gazing on thee now.

Lo! her Saviour smiles upon her,
She is kneeling at his throne;
He who gave her hath reclaimed her,
He hath made her all his own.
He hath guarded her from sorrow,
He hath sheltered her from pain;
She is smiling on his bosom,
She will never weep again.

O'er thy spirit softly falling
As the quiet April rain;
In the deep and solemn midnight,
Thou shalt hear her voice again.
Gently murmuring in thy dreaming,
She will bend above thy sleep;
"I am happy—I am happy,
Dearest mother do not weep."

MARY I——.

Logan Water, June, 1847.

TO THE PARENTS OF MARTHA.

". . . . . It has pleased God to take away two beloved objects, and to make you pass through the deep waters of severe affliction But you have the unspeakable consolation of believing that your loved ones have been removed to a better and brighter home.

Ah, yes! to die is gain!
Dark storms of sorrow gather o'er life's path,
Grief clusters round the fairest home and hearth,
Earth's purest pleasures oft are fraught with pain;
And weary hearts, with sin and sadness pressed,
Sigh for the land of loveliness and rest.

Unfading joys are there,
Bright crowns and waving palms of victory:
Rich are its strains of perfect melody:
Its shores are washed not by the waves of care—
Its sweet affections are not linked with fears—
Its radiant glories glisten not with tears.

But let not heaven's pure light
Dim our perceptions of this chequered life;
Earth may be stamped with sorrow and with strife,
Yet holy are its claims, when viewed aright;
To him who looks with thoughtful glance on time,
It ever wears an aspect most sublime.

Life is the hallowed sphere
Of sacred duties to our fellow men,
The precious and appointed season, when
Sweet deeds of love the mourner's heart may cheer;
The hour of patient and unwearied toil,
When seed from heaven is sown in earth's dark soil.

E——."

B——, N. J., June 6, 1847.

JUL 9 - 1951